DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 476 525 CE 084 991

AUTHOR	Summers, Judith
TITLE	Schools Are for Adults Too: Schools, Adults and Communities in the Learning Age. A Policy Discussion Paper.
INSTITUTION	National Inst. of Adult Continuing Education, Leicester (England).
ISBN	ISBN-1-86201-154-0
PUB DATE	2002-11-00
NOTE	51p.
AVAILABLE FROM	National Institute of Adult Continuing Education, Renaissance House, 20 Princess Road West, Leicester LE1 6TP, United Kingdom. Web site: http://www.niace.org.uk (8.95 British pounds).
PUB TYPE	Opinion Papers (120)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS
DESCRIPTORS	*Access to Education; Adult Education; *Adult Learning; Adult Programs; Adult Students; Change Strategies; Check Lists; Conventional Instruction; Definitions; Delivery Systems; Disadvantaged; Educational Change; Educational Facilities; Educational Needs; Educational Opportunities; *Educational Policy; Educational Practices; Family School Relationship; Foreign Countries; Government Role; Government School Relationship; Integrated Services; Intergenerational Programs; Models; Needs Assessment; Nontraditional Education; Outreach Programs; Participation; Policy Formation; Position Papers; Postsecondary Education; Public Policy; *School Community Relationship; *School Role; Student Recruitment
IDENTIFIERS	*Barriers to Participation; *England

ABSTRACT

This document argues the importance of schools' actual and potential role for adult learners in England and recommends ways of overcoming the barriers to participation created by current priorities, policies, and practices. Chapter 1 discusses the following themes: (1) the role of learning in a program for communities in crisis; (2) how priorities for learning are perceived in the context of helping communities in crisis; (3) schools as sites for neighborhood learning; and (4) community engagement and ownership. Chapter 2 reviews existing and potential delivery models and practices, including the following: (1) more established models such as classes on school premises and joint use of premises and self-financing; (2) the concept of the "full-service school"; and (3) "new platforms" with potential for engaging adults (including special status for secondary schools, enrichment schemes, and out-of-school-hours activities). Chapter 3 discusses the barriers to schools assuming a greater role in educating adults, including the lack of continuity of funding and lack of a consistent view about schools relationships' with their communities and adult learners, and offers examples of how partnerships can overcome these barriers. A checklist for schools starting to engage with adult learning or reviewing their own practice is appended. A 22-item reference list and 30-item bibliography are included. (MN)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 476 525

Schools are for adults too

Schools, adults and communities in the learning age

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Judith Summers

A policy discussion paper

2

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE, AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY, HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
P. Moledina
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
2A

niace
promoting adult learning

ED 381 191

Schools are for adults too

Schools, adults and communities in the learning age

Judith Summers

A policy discussion paper

niace
promoting adult learning

Published by the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education
(England and Wales)

21 De Montfort Street
Leicester
LE1 7GE

Company registration no. 2603322
Charity registration no. 1002775

First published 2002

© 2002 National Institute of Adult Continuing Education
(England and Wales)

All rights reserved. No reproduction, copy or transmission of this publication may be made without the written permission of the publishers, save in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, or under the terms of any license permitting copying issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency.

niace
promoting adult learning

NIACE, the National Institute of Continuing Adult Education, has a broad remit to promote lifelong opportunities for adults. NIACE works to develop increased participation in education and training. It aims to do this for those who do not have easy access because of class, gender, age, race, language and culture, learning difficulties or disabilities, or insufficient financial resources.

You can find NIACE online at www.niace.org.uk

Cataloguing in Publication Data
A CIP record of this title is available from the British Library

ISBN 1 86201 154 0

Designed and typeset by Publish2day Oxford Ltd., Oxfordshire
Printed and bound in the UK by Alden Press

Contents

Acknowledgements	iv
Foreword	v
Summary	vi
Introduction	1
Recommendations	3
Chapter 1: A new policy environment?	5
Chapter 2: How adults go to school	11
Chapter 3: Creating success	25
Appendix: Getting started	39
References	41
Bibliography	42

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank:

NIACE staff, who advised and commented on design and drafting: Peter Lavender; Annie Merton; Helen Prew; Alan Tuckett; Lenford White. Jeanne Haggart generously shared ideas and archives with me.

Rob Hunter, who carried out the research referred to in Chapter 2.

The many members of the NIACE Lifelong Learning Mailing List, who took much trouble to respond to my request for good practice examples; those quoted are acknowledged in the list of references and gave additional time to checking and revising; many more helped to shape ideas.

Colleagues and friends in Cheshire County Council Adult and Community Learning, who have provided a happy and stimulating working environment, many ideas and much personal support: Alistair Tranter, Hazel Manning and Noel Taylor. Many school heads and other colleagues in Cheshire have enlarged my understanding, including Nick Briscoe, Michael Carding, Mike Hayhurst, Val Lewis and Chris Sakhardande.

Judy Samuel, Head of Leek High School, Staffordshire; John Clegg, Head of Brookburn Community Primary School, Manchester; Julian Piper of CEDC; and Richard Ely, formerly Director of Education, Dorset County Council, for comments and advice, and Dr Anne West, LSE, for information on the Excellence in Cities evaluation.

Judith Summers

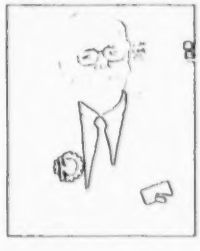
Foreword

Anyone who works with adults as learners quickly recognises the intimate links between schools and adult learning. Successful engagement at school is a key platform for continuing engagement in lifelong learning: poor experiences at school make people wary of re-engaging later. Schools are major sites of provision for learners and key avenues to linking with wider communities.

NIACE has debated the issues covered in this paper for almost a decade. Our policy discussion papers are the product of a dialogue between the author and the Institute's active membership. They describe a debate and make recommendations which we then publish. Their aim is to sharpen understanding of the contexts in which adults thrive as learners, and to foster commitment to the creation of a society where all adults might confidently and successfully pursue learning.

I am very grateful to Judith Summers for such an eloquent and reasoned statement of shared concerns – which will, I trust, contribute to wider debates about the locus of schools in lifelong learning.

Alan Tuckett
Director



Summary

The Introduction sets the scene by arguing the importance of schools' actual and potential role for adult learners, but contrasts these with the barriers created by current priorities and the significant limitations of some practices. Leaving schools to make their own way is not good enough. They need a clear message about our expectations, to work in collaboration, and to receive the support they need in order to contribute to creating learning communities.

The Recommendations are addressed to government, Local Education Authorities (LEAs), the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), the Inspectorates, and NIACE and its partners, including the Local Government Association (LGA). They draw on Key Ideas at the end of each chapter. All the recommendations offer pointers for schools wishing to start or improve their work.

Chapter 1: A new policy environment? discusses four policies that lead to a new view of schools' relationship with their communities. These are:

- The rationale for improving participation in learning as an essential element in social and economic regeneration
- How we therefore define local or neighbourhood learning, and tensions in current thinking on this
- The idea of schools as local learning centres and the focal point for learning in their communities
- Issues of partnership and community ownership.

While there is a strong steer for schools to engage with adult learning needs, we lack a consistent vision for local lifelong learning and its importance to communities for schools to work with.

Chapter 2: How adults go to school reviews the range and variety of practice. It starts with the more established models, such as classes on school premises, joint use and self-financing; the statutory basis for these; and judgements about their merits. The importance of family learning for adults leads in to the powerful concept of the 'full-service school'. 'New platforms' with potential for engaging adults include specialist status for secondary schools, Excellence in Cities (EiC), Education Action Zones (EAZs) and enrichment schemes such as Healthy Schools, Active Schools, Eco Schools, Artsmark and out-of-school-hours activity – with 'supplementary schools' being particularly important to some communities. There is insufficient evaluation of the merits and impact of the different models. There is also much unrealised potential because 'adult' dimensions are not adequately considered and we do not know enough about the views of adult learners.

Chapter 3: Creating success begins with the barriers, the most fundamental being continuity of funding and the lack of a consistent view about schools' relationships with their communities and adult learners. It offers examples of how partnerships can overcome these, with schools becoming part of a network of interests. It underlines the importance of exploiting existing community roots, but also the need for schools to draw on external expertise. It suggests that we should also think of what schools owe to their communities, adult learners and partners, and calls for a 'new deal' for schools that will recognise these changed expectations and redefine the idea of the 'community school'.

The **Appendix** gives a checklist for schools starting to engage with adult learning (or reviewing their own practice) with a note on some helpful resources.

Introduction

Schools are not only places where adults once learned; they are where huge numbers of adults continue to learn. They represent one of the most important and accessible learning resources available to communities. We do not know how many adults use this resource, but if we add up those attending classes on school premises, parents learning informally or formally and volunteers, the total runs into millions rather than thousands. Not forgetting, of course, teachers, support staff, lunchtime supervisors and school governors are also learners in the normal course of their work. Schools matter for adult learning.

In providing learning in various ways for the community, schools draw on a powerful tradition. LEA classes have always used schools, as the still-surviving usage of 'night school' suggests. The 'village college' movement started in 1930s Cambridgeshire took forward a vision of schools at the heart of learning for communities. This was developed in the 'community college' model adopted by some LEAs in the 1970s and 1980s, and can also be traced in the, then, widespread practice of attaching centre organisers to secondary schools. The flowering of family education also has deep roots in local practice. There is now an impressively wide range of engagements between schools and adult learners, as this paper will show.

Two agendas are pushing this engagement forward. For some schools, understanding that lifelong learning is rooted in learning to learn leads on to a re-valuation of their purpose: that they are there to develop competent, confident learners. This understanding helps to break down the boundary between school and the rest of life, and leads to a perception of schools as learning organisations and as a learning resource for others. More prominently, the agenda for widening participation in learning, intrinsic to strategies for social and economic inclusion and community wellbeing, means that we must look for resources that are close to hand and familiar: we cannot afford to ignore schools.

While we may know what goes on in our own localities, there is no consistent national sense of schools' contribution: schools do not yet have a defined mission for adult learning. On the one hand, an emerging cluster of initiatives and policies propose a focal role for schools as neighbourhood learning centres. On the other, the government's priority for schools is consistently presented as being to raise standards, with little attention to the context in which this is to be done.

Moreover, the barriers are massive. It is not only that schools lack a clear message. The weight of expectation for schools lies in the National Curriculum, the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, target-setting and pupil achievement. Teachers' workloads are high, and the workloads of heads and managers are increased by further devolution of funding and responsibilities. It is not surprising that thinking in many schools looks inward. In addition, the expectations of the OFSTED inspection framework and restrictions in the use of funding provide real disincentives to engage with adult learning. Schools are not generally encouraged to believe that working with adult learners is valued, or a priority in its own right, rather than an adjunct to enabling children to succeed. In such circumstances, there is no ingrained culture of response to adult learners.

Yet many schools have moved beyond their traditional contribution of providing a home for adult classes, and beyond an instrumental use of adult learning to support pupil attainment, to a wider vision. This recognises that inter-generational learning is distinctive and valuable in its own right; that adult learners in school may start with supporting children but should be encouraged to learn for themselves; that communities have a right to access and that this can be mutually enriching. Schools can then be seen as contributors to building their communities and raising collective aspirations.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

This paper gives examples of this, but more where the vision is partial. 'Community' funding opportunities for schools do not necessarily require them to tease out the distinctions between improving public access in general terms and genuinely widening it, or between community involvement and adult learning opportunities. Many schools provide some sort of 'community' learning, but this may be limited in scope, interesting in its own right but leading nowhere, and unrelated to other local learning. At worst, it may subvert other, long-standing strategies to build up a service and widen participation. Alternatively, schools may not make the most of their own potential because they do not recognise the strength of informal learning, and therefore fail to draw out the further learning opportunities from activities or projects. Some schools may simply not accept that the business of adult learning is relevant to them, or make the link between excluding pupils and the parents' sense of exclusion.

Schools, then, make their own choices about how they define their role and whether and how they contribute to adult learning. The intellectual and practical support they draw on to inform these choices is a matter of happenstance – committed individuals; the presence of adult classes; involvement in family learning; LEA strategies; being in an action zone or regeneration partnership; knowledge of funding and access to it; or links with local networks or national organisations... Perhaps the route in does not matter. What does matter, however, is that the response should be a considered one. If we do not give clear messages about our aspirations for schools and adult learners, and if we do not support schools in fulfilling these, we will fail both schools and adult learners: adults, because they need accessible local learning; schools, because they deserve the richness that the presence of adult learners brings.

This policy discussion paper, therefore, has two aims: first, to explore the policy issues and the case for adult learners in schools; and, second, to look at this in practice. I have used examples that are positive in the main. Many schools are already a long way down the road. What can we learn from them, and what support do schools need to engage successfully with the wider learning needs of their communities?

Recommendations

Government should:

- Adopt the aspiration for schools to become local learning centres, working in partnership with all other relevant interests to serve the needs of their communities, and create a strategy to achieve this
- State national expectations for how schools should serve the needs of adult learners, together with the support that national and local government, the LSC and the inspectorates will provide to achieve these
- Give guidance on how schools should define 'community' in developing their role and on how they should meet the needs of adult learners
- Immediately address these points in statutory guidance, following the passing of the Education Bill 2001
- Evaluate the curriculum offer of existing local learning centres in schools and other settings, including City Learning Centres and lottery-funded IT Centres; assess how far it meets the needs of adult learners and is sustainable; identify good practice and produce a strategy for further development
- Require evidence, in bids for specialist status and other funding, of an appraisal of the learning needs of the community and of how the proposal complements the contributions of other providers and will be sustainable
- Evaluate the impact of specialist status, EiC, EAZ and other funding streams on adult participation in the mid- to long-term
- Consider circumstances in which constraints on the use of delegated school budgets should be relaxed, to enable the school to implement an approved and non-profit-making action plan for serving adult learners in its community
- Require schools to show how the local community is involved in managing facilities and programmes of adult learning for which they receive additional funding.

LEAs should:

- Expect to take the lead role in helping schools to develop their role in adult learning and in securing collaboration for this
- Map the involvement of primary, secondary and special schools in serving adult learners; the potential for development and the needs for improvement
- Provide a consultancy and support service to help schools develop their community engagement and their role in adult learning, and build partnerships for this purpose
- Provide small-scale but continuing funding for schools to train and employ organisers or community education workers to develop learning on their premises
- Extend quality support for adult community learning to adult learning in school settings and link this to the development of school self-evaluation
- Incorporate adult learning in school settings in both their Adult Learning Plan and their Education Development Plan

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

- Adopt the aspiration for schools to become local learning centres and implement relevant parts of the recommendations for government.

The LSC should:

- Use its strategic role to ensure that funding for adult learners on school premises, including the use of funding for family learning, is steered through the LEA's Adult Learning Plan
- Work with local Lifelong Learning Partnerships to evaluate the potential for adult learners in school sixth forms in the course of Area Reviews
- Include adult learners' views of learning on school premises in its National Survey of Learners
- Adopt funding models and requirements for recording learning that are appropriate to informal, community-based learning.

OFSTED and the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) should:

- Consider the relevance of school activities to the community's adult learning needs and the quality of community involvement in its own right when evaluating schools' links with the community
- Develop a framework and guidance for evaluating the experience of adult learners in school sixth forms
- Consider the school's performance in meeting community learning needs as a success factor
- Collate and publish overviews of progress in these areas.

NIACE and its partners, including the LEA, should:

- Research the volume and range of schools' involvement in meeting the needs of adult learners, complemented by a study of how the new initiatives are engaging with adult learners and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of different models of engagement
- Research the perceptions of adult learners of the benefits, quality of experience and relationship with the host school
- Publicise good practice in community 'ownership' of adult learning opportunities in schools, including both formal governance and management, and less formal ways of steering provision, and produce guidance based on this
- Research the training needs of school teachers and managers to enable them to take on adult provision and develop training packages and toolkits
- Research and promote good practice in teaching young people and adults together
- Agree and promote a new policy agenda based on the principle that schools should contribute to their communities and to adult learners, on the development of schools as local learning centres and with learning for community wellbeing as the heart.

1 A new policy environment?

I want to begin with four themes in government policy that are helping to change the framework of reference for schools' relationship with adult learners in their communities. These are:

- The role of learning in a programme for communities in crisis
- How the priorities for learning are perceived in this context
- Thinking about schools as sites for neighbourhood learning
- Thinking about community engagement and ownership.

Policy is gradually moving towards a redefinition of the role of schools in their communities. However, it is not yet fully committed to the implications, because of both competing agendas for schools and the diversity of other interests and attitudes to learning. Nevertheless the shaping ideas are becoming clearer.

The rationale for widening participation in adult learning is complex, often confused and sometimes contested, but it lies at the heart of the redefinition. *Learning for the Twenty-First Century* took the wealth of statistical evidence on participation as the basis for its assertion that we lacked a culture of lifelong learning and argued the case for a transformative vision of what a learning society could be and do:

> *This country needs to develop a new learning culture of lifelong learning for all. It is essential to help the country and all of its people meet the challenges they now face... A culture of lifelong learning can act as a resource in the midst of change, helping people both to cope with change and in their strivings to shape it to their own devices, as active citizens.* (Fryer, 1997:3)

It is worth starting here because the report articulates a more comprehensive understanding of local learning than is found in later statements and encapsulates the four themes of this chapter.

Defining the 'problem'

The critical point on which both *Learning for the Twenty-First Century* and the subsequent Green Paper, *The Learning Age* (DfEE,1998), agreed was the nexus of low participation in learning, poverty and lack of cohesion in communities. The 'learning divide' is seen as both symptom and contributory factor in the parlous state of some communities. That many communities are in crisis is now a policy given. In 1998, the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) said:

> *In England as a whole the evidence we have suggests there are several thousand neighbourhoods and estates whose condition is critical, or soon could be.* (SEU, 1998:9)

The sense of crisis echoes through the work of the Policy Action Teams (PATs), set up to define the constituents of the problem and suggest solutions, and in the Urban and Rural White Papers published in 2000. The catastrophic impact of foot-and-mouth disease on some rural communities has only added to this. The SEU's 2001 Action Plan states the issues crisply:

> *The gap in living standards between the most deprived neighbourhoods and the rest of the country is wide, and grew through the 1980s and into the 1990s... [It] results from a complex combination of factors. Some of the factors are social and economic changes... When these combine they can create a complex and fast-moving vicious cycle. But, over several decades, the policies and actions of central and local*

> *government have not been good enough at tackling these issues; and sometimes they have been part of the problem.* (SEU, 2001: 8,17)

The strength of this definition is that it recognises the complexity of the issues and avoids blaming the victims. Both characteristics are important when we look at the agenda for lifelong learning from this immensely influential work.

The clutch of PAT reports from 18 teams offered lifelong learning solutions to four problems: unemployment, with an emphasis on 'employability', motivation and skills; youth under-achievement, disaffection and crime, with an emphasis on attitudes to learning and parenting; lack of access to resources and services, including IT; and community capacity for self-management. 'Key ideas' distilled from the PAT reports informed the 2001 action plan, including community-based neighbourhood learning centres, funding out-of-school-hours study support for secondary and older primary phase pupils, and the New Opportunities Fund programme for sports facilities for schools and wider community use (SEU, 2001:37-8). Together with other programmes – such as EiC for schools, Sure Start for under 5s, and the new Children's Fund to tackle child poverty – these provide a rationale and opportunity for schools to make a serious contribution to lifelong learning – and one that encourages them to take a long view.

So near and yet... The SEU work stops short of what seems an obvious conclusion. It does not synthesise the 'key ideas' into a programme for transforming schools into a resource and site for learning for a whole community. One cause for this may be that in the process of generating the 2001 action plan, the original problem has been redefined in a fragmented way that recognises the issue of adult participation in learning but detaches it from the other elements. It is as if each idea creates a boundary rather than a space. Another may well be the almost inevitable fragmentation of ownership, as different government departments make their contributions to the action plan – an ironic expression of the SEU's perception that government has indeed been part of the problem. At any event, the synthesis remains to be made by schools themselves and their partners.

Defining learning

Equally, we need to be clear what sort of experience of learning is to be offered:

> *...the right kind of learning opportunities – those which really engage people's interests and which help them develop the skills they want and need – should be made available in suitable local settings... Engagement is much more likely to be effective where those involved have some credibility with local people, so the greater the involvement of local people in the management and delivery of learning, the better... there should be a step-change in the level of 'first-rung' provision that is available to them. Such provision should be delivered where people live through neighbourhood learning centres, in the management and operation of which local people should wherever possible have a significant stake.* (PATS, 1999: Para 43)

The vision of the Skills PAT's report is echoed in the 'remit' letter to the new LSC from the, then, Secretary of State, David Blunkett:

> *Local Learning and Skills Councils should look to use the Local Initiatives Fund [i.e. their local discretionary funds] to support the development of stronger communities who are better able to maintain momentum in neighbourhood renewal, and to facilitate the development of a wider range of learning opportunities, including skills development for individuals... I therefore expect local Learning and Skills Councils to take a holistic view of how their contribution fits with the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal.* (DfEE, 2000b: Para 24)

The objectives set for the new Council's first corporate plan balance equal opportunities in terms of access and success with the contribution of lifelong learning to improving economic performance. However the focus on targets inevitably leads to highlighting formally-recognised achievement – and to individual performance as a proxy for communal wellbeing.

Nowhere is the tension seen more sharply than in policies for basic skills. National policies now cover targets for reducing the number of adults with poor literacy or numeracy skills; tests for those presenting; threats to withdraw benefit for those unwilling to reform; a redesign of the curriculum; and tests of achievement. The 'problem' of these adults is conceived quite precisely and narrowly to produce a very focused solution. Yet at the same time other developments, such as the short-term Basic Skills Community Fund in 2000, have invested in building capacity for basic skills learning in community settings that works in a much more fluid, contextualised way. A comparable tension is inherent in the extensive programme of 'community access to lifelong learning' funded by the New Opportunities Fund (NOF – a Lottery Distributor) and designed to focus on social exclusion. Successful bids required demanding targets for the take-up of ICT-based learning rather than a community-generated programme. My experience is that the local centres can struggle to find funding to respond to the wider learning interests expressed by the beneficiaries and produce a truly coherent programme.

The danger, then, is that neighbourhood learning will be steered by funding and limited perceptions to an unimaginative version of 'first rung provision'. Typically, this might include taster courses to draw people in, IT skills, short sharp basic skills, a bit of employability and perhaps some training to tackle specific local skills shortages. These may well be what are initially demanded in a community. They are unlikely to be where it ends – or sufficient to build confidence in learning, or build community capacity.

Strikingly, in the discussion of 'the right kind of learning opportunities', one searches in vain for a reflection of the new thinking about 'learning to learn' and how the school curriculum could be transformed by a pedagogy for learning to learn. Developing motivational processes, 'mind-friendly learning' strategies, and competences in managing one's own learning are quite as applicable to adult learners as to young learners: particularly so, one would suppose, to those who haven't succeeded in the formal system. Even more important is the argument that the learning-to-learn agenda leads straight into creating a new 'learning democracy', nurturing and displaying the citizenship behaviours that would be precisely those needed for communities to own their own learning – worked out shared values, mutuality and managing the learning environment (Alexander, 2000). The tensions in policy for adult learning described above have obvious parallels with that for schools. Learning to learn may be publicly praised, but it is not reflected in official measures of attainment – although the learning support and mentoring strands of EiC imply recognition of its importance. Transforming the curriculum is not consistently promoted as a means of turning around 'failing' schools. It is an option available to individual schools and enlightened LEAs. Perhaps this comparative lack of policy visibility may explain why it has not explicitly influenced the proposals for local lifelong learning.

In teasing out the complex relationship between community crisis and learning, official policy has not reached a fully-developed and tested consensus on either *what* learning matters or just *how* it matters. However it does accept that access and attitudes to learning intertwine. This re-states the complexity of the challenge to schools considering their engagement with their community. The opportunity to design from local aspirations, rather than narrowly focussed external terms of reference, remains on the table.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Schools as local learning centres

One element of the NAGCELL project was the creation of local learning centres that would bring learning 'closer to home', not just in a literal sense, but as an integral part of local self-activity and community wellbeing. Schools (primary schools were specifically mentioned) could become such local learning centres (Alexander, 2000:60–1). The idea can be tracked through the SEU reports and many recent schools initiatives, such as EiC. In *Raising Standards: Opening doors: Developing links between schools and their communities* the DfEE offered the following guidance to schools:

- *Links with the community help schools in raising pupils' motivation, expectations and achievement*
- *In many locations, the school is the main, or even only, place that can provide the community with sports and other facilities. Using the local school as a centre for adult learning, childcare facilities and for meetings helps regenerate and strengthen communities...*
- *Increased use of school premises can lead to improve security...*
- *Links with the community reinforce the fact that all education relates to the wider community...* (DfEE, 1999b:4)

There is an obvious relationship with the SEU work (but, oddly, no cross-referencing between the two). The booklet reports good examples of where schools are creating local learning centres in some form. Like the rationale above, these are presented as a sort of common sense, a pragmatic seizing of opportunities or solving of problems, rather than being inspired by a vision of learning. This is not of course to say that the schools concerned lacked such a vision – rather, that it was not thought necessary to state it. A series of boxes records approving comments by OFSTED on schools that have reaped the benefits of community use. This neatly reinforces the message of the publication's title – that access for the community matters because it supports the primary mission of schools: to raise standards of pupil attainment.

The Rural White Paper issued in 2000 sees that rural schools are the heart of a community. It picks up on their importance as sites of community learning, notes that they could house the 'one stop community service' recommended by the Schools Plus PAT, and recommends active promotion of shared and community use (DETR, 2000). (The idea is less strongly expressed in the parallel Urban White Paper.) The November 2001 Education Bill proposes to give school governing bodies the power to provide facilities or services for the benefit of pupils, pupils' families and the wider community. Presumably this will be done through the power for governing bodies to form or participate in limited companies that the Bill also offers. The ideas are explained in the preceding White Paper:

> *Schools are an important resource for the whole community and close partnerships with other public services can bring great benefits. We will support schools to work with local providers, including health and social services, to make available on their site a wide range of easily accessible support for children and their families.* (DfES, 2001:2.16)

> *Schools must be a focus for learning for the whole community, accessible to all, with modern and attractive learning facilities for families and people of all ages... We want to design and create school buildings suitable for a transformed and diversified education service.* (DfES, 2001:8.24)

There is an interesting distinction (or confusion?) between the models being offered here. The first, to do with cross-service working, applies in the White Paper to primary schools, and obviously stems from the work on social inclusion (described above) and the idea of the 'full-service

school'. The second is specifically about local learning. The two are, of course, by no means mutually exclusive: a community resource is a community resource and the fewer boundaries the better. However, once again, we do not get a clear vision.

The need for one is obvious in the light of the reactions to the Bill's publication. The press headlined the proposal as 'schools for stamps and bankers orders', while commentators worried about 'governors taking their eye off the ball' and 'diversionary issues' (TES, 2001). It seemed that the prevailing concept of schools' core business was not to be challenged. The real difficulty seems to me to be threefold. First, while schools will be obliged to consult their LEAs before developing other services, structures for planning and partnership working are as yet under-developed. Second, the continuing culture of promoting schools' autonomy will make it hard either to deal with unhelpful proposals or to involve schools who resist local partnerships. Schools might choose to promote activities – for example, income-generating programmes, rather than catering for those least able to pay – with the motive of earning income to benefit pupils. This is understandable but does not sit easily with using their new power to contribute to neighbourhood renewal. It might in fact affect the capacity of other players to make ends meet. Thirdly, many (perhaps most) schools simply lack the expertise to make good use of the opportunity for 'becoming a focus for learning', or do more than offer a handful of classes using the sports centre or IT suite. Statutory guidance, to be issued later in 2002, will need to tease out these issues.

The steer is getting stronger, but any response is voluntary. At present, any school has the option of standing aside, however much its neighbourhood needs the amenities it could offer. Even if a school is in difficulty, it does not have to choose to open up to its community as part of the solution. If it does so, the expectation is still that this should be justified in terms of benefits to pupils, which may in turn limit its view of what it might be doing. If it chooses not to, it is not accountable to its community for this choice – other than through its governing body, whose priority is expected to be the child population. Of course, many schools do (and more will) make the 'community' decision. The government must assume that the combined weight of the neighbourhood renewal strategy, the influence of local strategic partnerships and access to funding will be sufficient persuasion. Sooner or later, however, schools' right to define themselves to the extent of opting in or out of the community agenda will need to be challenged more explicitly. To say what we expect of schools, as part of their communities, would be a good idea.

Self-activity and ownership

As ideas about neighbourhood renewal flow into spending, lifelong learning's role in regeneration will be simplified and distorted unless the notion of self-activity is taken seriously. As Jane Thompson wryly observes: 'Part of New Labour's difficulty in converting some of its aspirations and rhetoric into reality is its reluctance to hand over control without predetermining the terms and conditions by which that control will be managed' (NIACE, 2001:40). Government guidance on the new, over-arching Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) – another result of the SEU's work – suggests a distinctive role for neighbourhoods themselves; not superior to, but alongside that of other stakeholders in contributing to local decision-making in a practical way. Neighbourhood renewal strategies for the most deprived wards are expected to have a section on 'local action on learning for neighbourhood renewal', which will create the means of securing local accountability for neighbourhood management. Alongside this, the new Community Empowerment Fund is intended to enable local interests to 'engage on an equal basis with other sectors' in the decision-making process (DETR, 2001). Setting aside the impoverished notion of local democracy that this formulation implies, those schools that are creating democratic ways of learning and linking these to family involvement have important insights to offer.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

For schools (as for other services) the emerging models of partnership and networking, however constrained, do reflect the principle that genuine community ownership is essential for neighbourhood learning to work. This means not only accountability to the communities being served, but also their engagement in steering the service. In learning, this must involve going beyond formal governance to accurate dialogue about interests, access, ways of learning and kinds of support. Most funding streams already require evidence of community need and of consultation on bids. The agenda for LSPs and neighbourhood renewal proposes to move to a more dynamic relationship, and offers some resources to help this happen. By contrast, the DfES guidance in *Raising Standards: Opening doors* (DfEE, 1999b) refers only to formal and legal aspects of governance. Equally, the November 2001 Education Bill does not alter the basic model of governance or require any particular arrangements for community involvement if a school provides local services. Once again, the principle of school autonomy rules. The result is that the requirements of governance do not match the new community agenda.

In the end, we can reasonably say that the arguments for *access* have been fairly accepted and that if schools do not choose to exploit these, they stand to lose in terms of investment as well as in raising expectations and enlisting support amongst parents and the wider community. However the *vision* for lifelong learning in civil society is partial and fragmented. Schools and their partners will have to work, sometimes without much policy support, to understand and exploit the real potential for change.

Key ideas

- National policy should recognise the potential of schools to be 'local learning centres' for their community and redefine the role of schools to this end. The disparate policy strands affecting schools' involvement with their communities should be synthesised into a coherent strategy.
- As local learning centres, schools should develop adult learning activities from the expressed aspirations and needs of their local community. This should reflect an understanding of the potential range of adult learning interests, rather than relying on the terms of reference of a particular funding stream.
- Schools should be required to work with their LEA, LSPs, Neighbourhood Forums, existing local providers and other players to plan, design and fund adult learning programmes. In turn, partners should provide the expertise and support to enable schools to understand the learning implications of national and local policies and practice.
- Statutory guidance on the implementation of the 2002 Education Act should include a requirement for schools wishing to take advantage of the provisions of the Act to work in this way.
- Local learning centres in schools should have lines of direct accountability to the community and community interests must play a leading role in steering and managing adult learning activities.
- In designing the local learning centre's activities, schools and partners should put the creation of a learning culture, learning for democracy and community wellbeing at the heart.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

2 How adults go to school

The vision may be partial and fragmented, but a huge variety of activities is taking place. This chapter tries to capture the different frameworks within which schools engage with adult learners. It does not purport to be comprehensive, to estimate the proportion of schools engaged in different ways of working with adult learners, or to evaluate their impact. As I suggested in the Introduction, we may think we know what goes on locally, but it is difficult to add it up to form a national picture. The need for more systematic knowledge of what schools are doing, and to what effect, will be a recurring motif.

The models we know

Research carried out for NIACE to inform this paper produced a classification of what schools might conventionally be doing.[1]

Kind of school	Kind of provision	Management
Secondary	Infill into mainstream school classes – *possibly declining*	Usually school, sometimes college partnership
Mainly secondary (some primary)	Mainly formal – evening programme; plus day if rooms available – *the dominant model*	LEA Service – directly or management devolved to school
Mainly secondary (some primary)	Mainly formal – evening programme; plus day if rooms available – *growing importance*	Further Education College (may include provision contracted by LEA)
Primary	Family learning, work with parents, learning for adults from this – *increasing importance*	School and/or LEA
Secondary/primary	Formal/ informal learning for adults – self-financing or using other funding sources – *growing importance*	School
Secondary school/ community colleges	Community learning (any of the above) – *possibly declining*	School – with funding and specialist staff

Can we draw any conclusions about this diversity? What happens in any locality is a result of history, tradition and particular choices. Examples are the strength of the community college model in East England and Somerset; or decisions by LEAs to contract out the provision that they secured or maintain a free-standing service.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Conventionally, for quite practical reasons like the size of furniture and availability of equipment, secondary schools are more likely to offer the familiar adult evening programme. However family learning seems to be more strongly rooted in primary schools. This is probably because of a combination of the more intimate relationship that the schools have with parents at that phase, the links with early literacy and numeracy and the constraints of funding streams. One would expect the role of Further Education (FE) colleges in managing evening programmes in schools to have increased following the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act and contracting out by LEAs. The extent to which schools manage programmes themselves will have increased as a result of local management and policies (discussed later in this section). Of course, the models are not mutually exclusive, nor will there necessarily be a single model in any one area.

Particularly interesting is the suggestion that 'community learning' through the community school or college model might be declining. This may be the case if the present statutory framework (see below) is not conducive. Perhaps competitors such as FE colleges are more attractive to adults, and this may also explain the decline in adults joining school classes. It may be that schools are drawing back for other reasons, such as pupil safety, and I know of at least one school where the sixth-formers successfully objected to it. Yet it may also be that the model is simply updating, and that while the traditional 'community college' is not gaining ground, the idea is being revitalised through specialist status or particular local partnerships.

We have no firm information on how the patterns vary between urban, suburban and rural settings. We might reasonably assume that family learning initiatives concentrate in areas of deprivation; or that adult use of secondary schools in the evening is more likely in suburbs and rural areas, away from purpose-built centres. (Special schools were not included in the research.) We know neither how many schools contribute to adult learning in one of the ways listed above, nor how many adult learners use them. We 'know' all these models in an organisational way, and local practitioners will know how well any particular one works. If there is a conclusion to be drawn, it is that the models say more about external influences on schools' involvement in adult learning, than about the best way to do it – or the benefits to either schools or adult learners.

The statutory basis

The statutory framework within which all this takes place now gives primacy to the governing body's control of the occupation and use of school premises. The exception is where legally-binding commitments are in place, such as a 'transfer of control agreement' or a LEA directive for the use of premises out of school hours (DfEE, 1999b). However while governing bodies have a duty under the School Standards and Framework Act (1998) to 'have regard to' the desirability of making the premises available for community use outside school hours, they are also constrained by not being allowed to use their delegated budget to subsidise non-school activities.

Community colleges have hitherto drawn on LEA (and in some cases Further Education Funding Council – FEFC) funding for their adult learners, thus enabling an integrated strategy for meeting the needs of their diverse groups of learners. Arguably, the transfer of this funding to the LSC from 2001 may make it more difficult for them to maintain their mission, or indeed their range of programmes. With this possible exception, the statutory framework now in force seems reasonably capable of protecting existing interests, but is not suited to developing new ones. The 1998 Act defines five different categories of school. Ownership of assets, powers to make agreements, the powers of LEAs and rights over income vary between them. Anyone working for a LEA has practical experience of the confusions that can arise in practice, particularly in respect of the community dimension of schools' bids for Lottery funding or specialist status.

'Self-financing' activities for adults on school premises, fit more or less unobtrusively into the statutory framework. These might range from hiring the sports hall out to local clubs or making the school hall available for weddings, to innovative educational activities developed by the school on its own. For example, a high school offers classes to parents on 'mind-friendly learning', not just to help their children but to develop their own learning skills. Such arrangements are so localised that we may overlook their importance to adult learners, or indeed to schools.

Adults also access learning on school premises through 'joint-use' facilities: broadly, the shared ownership of premises such as leisure centres and libraries, with use shared between the school and community interests. Local management of schools and the 'fair funding' requirements for the proportion of a LEA budget to be delegated – together with the complications of external funding such as lottery bids – have made such arrangements creak. In response, 'transfer of control agreements', to clarify management responsibilities or the formation of trusts, have been used to modernise the formal arrangements.

With both joint-use and 'self-financing' activities we need to recognise the opportunities both gained and lost. There is more activity, but without necessarily providing the chances to move on. Adults are engaged in ways that are not labelled as formal education, and that fit with the fabric of their lives, but this may not be associated with a determined effort to widen the constituency of users. Joint use and self-financing, therefore, raise sharply the question of how a school defines its community. This is yet another area in which it would be useful to research the impact on adult learning.

The established models: views and judgements

How well do the models described above serve adult learners' needs? The research surveyed the views of a number of experienced adult educators about school-based provision. Unsurprisingly, these are inconclusive because they reflect local particularities. Set against the relative accessibility and low cost of secondary school premises is the lack of an 'adult friendly' environment, facilities and, for some adults, problems of psychological access. Some (many?) secondary schools are thought to lack specialists and suitably trained staff who can provide a proper front-line service as well as tutoring. Some are thought to lack management and cultural commitment, and the capacity to create an adult-appropriate learning experience. Participation by adults in daytime classes raises its own concerns: the value of local accessibility, but the need for appropriate timetabling and facilities, and whether mixing different age groups is in itself legitimate. Primary schools seem to be viewed more positively, perhaps because their engagement is understood to be more focussed and involve active partnerships. They are seen as physically and psychologically more accessible and strongly linked to parents and communities.

Traditionally school staff were heavily involved in adult programmes and the survey suggests that this remains a difficult issue. Respondents thought teachers might well be exhausted, unable to relate effectively to adult learners and unused to engaging with adult learners' aims. Adult educators understandably resent the assumption – much less common now – that school-qualified teacher status fits one to teach adults; school staff may resent the implication that they are not good enough. (I can remember both sets of feelings when I became a manager.) To these concerns we should add the demands of adopting adult-centred teaching styles and creating an adult-friendly ambience in schools where adults join daytime school classes. One communicant was sure that placements in daytime school classes made use of existing resources but that the arrangement was rarely ideal: adults might have the same learning objectives as school students, such as a GCSE, but did not have the same learning needs.[2]

If schools, then, are to become more than purely formal hosts for adult learners, there are two distinct issues that would benefit from further study. What additional training do today's school staff need to become good tutors of adults and managers of provision? Also what teaching strategies enable both adult and young people's learning needs to be met in the same setting?

Formal evaluative material is also inconclusive in respect of the more traditional roles of secondary schools. Colleges or adult education services that use schools will have such material in the form of satisfaction surveys, self-assessment reports and perhaps views of management committees, where these exist. We don't know how far these have been used to focus strategic decisions by providers, and they are certainly not available in a form that can be added up to make a national picture. It's fair to assume that local managers make implicit or explicit assumptions about the trade-offs for adult learners in using schools. Yet, from my own experience, my guess is that the most common strategic consideration is financial. Does the number of learners justify the provision? If so, local accessibility outweighs the limitations of premises, and therefore those imposed on the curriculum, and all the familiar practical problems – the school wanting to use the hall for an event, bad lighting in the approaches, no proper office for the centre manager, and so forth.

Unless individual schools have moved to self-evaluation (which is now developing) and include community uses in this process, evidence of their point of view will be lacking. The OFSTED handbook on secondary school inspection refers only briefly to community learning. If 'formal community education' is part of the provision, inspectors are to determine 'how far it serves the community and the school'. The handbook sensibly asks about leadership and management, how far provision is based on needs analysis and to what extent the impact of provision is monitored (OFSTED, 1999:66). The context is: 'does the school have links with the community which contribute to pupils' learning?' There is no presumption that community education is a sign of a 'successful school' and it does not feature as such in recent annual reports by the Chief Inspector of Schools. However reports on individual schools (as noted in the previous chapter) do reflect the strengths of community dimensions to a school's work: but it is difficult to add these up because there is no clear conceptual framework for this aspect of OFSTED reports. In the excellent *Building Learning Communities* set of handbooks, produced by the CEDC (Community Education Development Centre), eight quotations from OFSTED reports give three different takes: relevance and enrichment of learning through involvement with the community; the community as an educational resource; and the school as a resource for the community. (CEDC, 2000a:5)

Clearly community college models have much to share – both in demonstrating how a whole-institution approach works and in how particular issues (such as the skills required) can be tackled. As *Building Learning Communities* suggests: 'what separates a school which wants to work with its community from other schools is its organisational values (CEDC, 2000a:7). These will now inevitably be determined by the individual institution (and its direct sponsors in the case of faith schools or those with business support) rather than, as once, by an LEA-wide ethos and policy. The impact of the community college format on the curriculum and pupil achievement is well-documented, but the diversity of models now suggests that we should reassess their impact on access and success for adult learners.

Family learning

In her guide to family learning, Jeanne Haggart remarks that:

> *Family learning has been taking shape fairly quietly on the margins of adult education, school improvement, early years and basic skills. It has been emerging from the spaces*

between the big set pieces such as the national literacy and numeracy strategies...

There has been no shortage of innovation in programme development, nor in staff commitment to making family learning happening locally on the ground. Particularly inventive has been its ability to spread relatively small amounts of resource over a large area. (Haggart, 2000: 81)

This may explain why the role of schools in family learning is seen by both school and adult learning professionals as less contentious. It has always used partnerships that match different expertise and, although often led by LEAs or initiatives such as EAZs or Sure Start (so not necessarily 'bottom-up'), services tend to work carefully *with* rather than *across* the grain. Moreover, the impact is direct and obvious in terms of parental support for children's learning, even if demands for statistical tracking of its impact in lowered truancy rates or higher attainment levels cannot instantly be met.

Haggart follows others in identifying five aspects to family learning:

- *Informal learning within the family*
- *Family members learning together*
- *Learning about roles, relationships and responsibilities in relation to the stages of family life, including parenting education*
- *Learning...in relation to wider society, in which the family is a foundation for citizenship*
- *Learning how to deal with agencies that serve families.* (Haggart, 2000:3–4)

Working through this often interlocking set of intergenerational activities, practitioners are unlikely to lose sight of how family learning is a springboard for adults to learn in their own right – or to be more accurate, how family learning and adults learning 'for themselves' intertwine. To take two simple, local examples from my own experience:

- A 'taster' arts programme, organised for parents in the community room of a primary school, builds confidence to join a 'help your child to learn' course
- A 'positive parenting' course, organised through a community action project and using primary school premises, leads to some participants joining basic skills or IT classes.

The 'quietness' of family learning is less likely to continue given its prominence in the PAT reports, Sure Start, and now the LSC's agenda. This challenges schools and their family-learning partners to understand and overcome the tensions inherent in the combination of policy interests, each of which has its own mission and measures of success. If family learning does not pick its way through these and find ways of matching up the interests, some of its potential may be lost. Three examples sent to me show some of the issues in practice:

S is a mother of three children, all under seven. Last year she took part in a year-long family learning programme with her 6-year-old daughter. The course covered English and computer literacy and took place once a week for a full day at the middle school. S says, 'When I started the course, I couldn't read a whole book to the end. Now I can... It was important to me for my little girl, to help her with her reading.' With the computer literacy component they did practical things like put their CVs together but they also put a children's book together, something that S didn't think she be able to do. It was a challenge but she did it. It was daunting to start with and she was

nervous about having to go back into school but her thought process was 'if I did it my girl gets help. There was work to do at home but that got your brain going.' There were six parents who took the course. She knew one of them already. She says it was good to meet new people like this, to meet more parents of the kids who are at school with her daughter. She loved it. She says, 'You think you know a lot but Sarah [the tutor] teaches you so much! You achieve such a lot. I want other people to get involved. It's well worth doing.'[3]

In Torbay, a number of primary schools have taken up the challenge of providing through community education courses which encourage parents and carers to attend and promote family learning. 'Parent Learning Children Learning' courses which promote working relationships between schools, adults and their children are accredited. A parent attending a Family Literacy course in a primary school became bitten by the 'learning bug' and went on to take the Basic Skills Tutor course. She then progressed onto a 7307 Teaching Adults course and now 18 months later she delivers link courses in schools to support parents in 'Keeping up with your Children'. We do have a number of parents who have progressed in this way and we feel we have enabled adults to take the stepping stones to their chosen careers through many informal and formal opportunities. There have been hurdles to get over, and hoops to jump through, while setting up projects with the flexibility and sensitivity each one requires.[4]

A WEA and Fathers Plus partnership wanted to involve fathers with their children. So two IT taster courses were set up. Course One – for fathers and their teenage lads (we actually had grandfathers and uncles as well). The High School provided the facilities and helped to promote the course in their normal evening class activities. The course was to encourage the fathers and sons to learn together and co-operatively using, a variety of Microsoft Office programs. We covered basic word processing, desktop publishing and spreadsheets. Course Two – the first 7 weeks of the course were adults only – again fathers, grandfathers and uncles of children within a Primary School. Here we gave a basic introduction to Microsoft Office programs, as well as internet research skills and a few education-specific programs. The children were then brought in and the adults helped the children with a few projects. The school again provided the facilities and also improved their community profile and, as a side result, were able to recruit a few classroom helpers. Success really came out of Course Two, where we were able to maintain full course strength and had very good feedback at the end of the course. One grandfather, who had never touched a computer before, was so enthusiastic that he was able to work with his grandchild both at school and at home. We also found out that he had already been helping out in the school with reading. He was put forward for a national literacy award, which resulted in him attending a presentation in London. As I was only the tutor and not the project organiser, I don't had know what will happen next. I know the fathers were all interviewed and hopefully we will be able to continue the courses – fund availability being taken into consideration. [my emphasis][5]

Each example poses the question of continuities in different ways. In the first example S may continue through working with other parents ('I want other people to get involved'), as well as in some form of learning 'for herself'. In Torbay, there is a classic example of progression, to which the organisers' own efforts are crucial ('we slotted her into...' 'we have enabled adults'). The Fathers Plus activity mattered to both participants and schools and uncovered, typically, the richness of adults' engagement with learning: but it is not clear whether the experience can be

sustained, developed or spread. Issues arise not because of the practitioners and participants in these examples, but where policy-makers and managers see family learning as being about improving children's rather than adults' integration and attainment, or if there is no shared ownership of the wider agendas for learning. As Haggart remarks, 'It is not yet clear how the breadth of curriculum that is developing can be sustained without a commitment to long-term funding' (Haggart, 2000:82), and, we might add, without real understanding of the power of family learning. For our purposes, these examples strongly underline the necessity of partnership working, in which the expertise of family learning teams and adult tutors is essential.

For some schools, the context for family learning may be the idea of the 'full-service school', as suggested in the PAT and other reports. The principle is that the school becomes the nexus for meeting needs, involving school staff, educational welfare officers, early years and childcare partnerships, Social Services, health professionals (such as the school nurse) and other appropriate agencies. As in Sure Start at the pre-school stage, the aim is not to provide a mechanism for case conferences but to create a comprehensive service for all children and families associated with the school, and also a single point of contact for parents and carers. The principle can be developed: if the facility is in place it could be an access point for a variety of public services. Some definitions do not include adult learning in its own right; and this risks perpetuating the tensions I have already referred to (Wolfendale and Bastiani, 2000:54). However it is not difficult to see how it can be added and how the challenge of community ownership could also be met.

Mog Ball cites a Manchester project involving three primary schools. This is not just about one-stop shops but aims for children and families to 'reach a situation where their need for education and health-care support approximates to the general demand, without additional services'. Each school has a community room and, in addition to the professionals listed above, the support group includes parent representatives, local voluntary and community organisations and the adult education service. (Ball, 1998:18–19)

We might of course argue that this admirably holistic approach should not be confined to urban areas needing to catch up with the 'general demand'. For instance, the idea resonates with the proposals for rural schools mentioned in the previous chapter and obviously informs the proposals in the 2001 Education Bill. There is no reason, therefore, why it should be seen as a primary phase opportunity, although it is usually described in the primary context. Combined with the new entrees to adult learning offered by specialist status and other recent initiatives, it helps us to envisage a renewed model for community schooling.

New platforms

EiC, EAZs and the array of specialist status opportunities for secondary schools all open up new opportunities for 'the community' – for adult learners in some guise – and many are informed to some extent by the 'local learning centre' model. It needs to be said at the outset that, as yet, it will be difficult to judge their impact on adult learning for several reasons. In some initiatives, such as EAZ, the involvement of adult learners is primarily linked to children's attainment (although this is not to say that local examples do not go beyond this). Then the definition of 'community' is itself fluid. Both factors mean that evaluation does not pay consistent attention to the impact on adult learners.

Specialist-status bids by secondary schools now require a third of revenue funding to go to 'community' objectives. I offer two case studies from personal experience of different approaches to this, both from 11–16 schools.[6]

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

School W is in a city, serving a diverse area. A successful Arts College bid gives it partnership with its feeder primary schools, pride of place in its 'Community Development Plan' and the lion's share of the community funding – using this for curriculum enhancement and links with other schools, the college, local cultural activities. Partnership working with groups in the wider community uses existing contacts with cultural and other organisations identified in the school's audit of strengths. There is particular attention to 'ethnic' arts [the school's description] and a handful of progression opportunities for adults, both linking closely to the school curriculum, but not to the local adult education centre

School H has decided to prepare a specialist-status bid, also in the arts. The LEA has already convened a partnership of lifelong-learning interests in its catchment area, which has wards in the 'top 2000' for multiple deprivation. The school is a member of this, with a broad commitment to developing its 'community' role. It is concerned about parent and pupil expectations, attitudes to staying on, and also about basic skills and participation in lifelong learning in the community. Supported by the LEA, it commissioned a consultancy, looking at community needs, the school's own strengths, the roles of other local players and funding streams. As result, it is planning a programme, working with the partnership members and its family of primary schools, which will use the arts as a hook to develop family learning and adult participation. This will inform its specialist-status bid.

Each school has a different way of defining its community and selecting its partners, because of both local context and school-specific issues (such as attainment levels). The motivation and commitment of the schools' leadership plays a large part. One approach seems to work outwards from the school's strengths and its sense of what will engage present and future students (its 'unique selling point'), and exploits activities and organisations already in place to do this. The other is looking for ways of strengthening its role in a less diverse community and tackling engagement in learning at the grass roots. By permitting such variety, the bidding process enables schools to be highly responsive. However, this may come at the possible price of getting a more widely-owned agreement on needs that schools could help to tackle, and of integrating specialist status bids into neighbourhood strategies and real partnership working. 'Possible', because it is open to the school to do all of these things – but not compulsory. There is a decided contrast between this approach and the 'full-service school' model described above.

OFSTED's generally positive report on the early experiences of sports colleges describes different ways in which they fulfil their aim of being a resource for the wider community. Those listed include cross-phase working with the local family of schools, local and regional sports clubs, health authorities and health action zones, parents, the LEA, Leisure Services and Youth Services. Once again, the choice of how to define the community is made individually, but judging by the report's success stories, the predominant approach at this stage was very much adding on the 'community' to the school:

> *The involvement of coaches and other appropriately qualified adults in the school-based curriculum or extended curriculum activity needs to be linked directly to those activities taking place beyond the school. The Sports College may therefore make a valuable contribution to...initiatives designed to increase participation and establish exit routes for pupils beyond school.* (OFSTED, 2000)

A year later, OFSTED's overview of specialist schools in general said that, other than sports colleges, 'most specialist schools have had difficulty in fulfilling their new role as a resource for the community. It is currently the weakest part of their work' (OFSTED, October 9 2001). Measured in terms of achieving targets, this may be the case, but the notion of a 'community

resource' is clearly fluid. It would be more interesting to look at the impact in terms of adult participation and learning gain over a longer period. If some schools are opportunist in the way they approach 'community', others may be doing good work with adult learners that goes unrecognised because it does not match government's preoccupations.

Has EiC fared differently? The 'community' arm of the programme to raise city pupils' and parents' aspirations and transform school strategies to this end is found in the 'city learning centre': essentially an ICT learning centre that is open to pupils, partner schools and the wider community in some form. It is planned to have 105 such centres by 2004. The second EiC annual report shows the diversity of the city learning centres: curriculum enrichment; training teachers in advanced technologies; networking local schools; out-of-school-hours activities; cyber cafes for the local community to use after school hours; 'courses for the local community from basic IT to the European Computer Driving Licence'; Microsoft and Cisco training; and links with further and higher education. (DfES, 2002). It reveals just the same diversity or ambiguity in the definition of 'community' (and hence in relating to adult learners) as the specialist status programmes, and the report sums them up as 'an enormous resource for schools'. However, a case study of the Refugee project at the North-West Manchester City Learning Centre – significantly involving work with the Adult Education Service – shows something of their potential for enhancing adult learning:

> *This project, a partnership between the CLC, Adult Education Centre and local schools, brought together pupils and adult learners from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Kosovo to work on an IT project: 'Welcome to the UK'. Students, who all attended English language classes at the Adult Education Centre, used this project as a framework to express their feelings about living in their new community. They took pictures with digital cameras of themselves and their neighbourhood. These were then developed...into a presentation, a display board and a website. Some images were further developed into textile designs. Participants in the project enjoyed meeting new people, learning new skills and improving their spoken and written English, and gained a better understanding of the cultural differences between their own countries and the UK.* (DfES, 2002)

Interim evaluation of the City Learning Centres bears out these impressions. Community use was 'surprisingly diverse' and included 'parent and toddler groups, youth centres, pupil referral units, small businesses, family groups, art and drama projects, mature learners, including the retired/elderly'. Centres did not keep data consistently. 'The analysis of the "user profile" yielded more information on *who* was using the Centres than *what* they were doing.' The four centres studied in detail varied in the priority they gave to community access; some had concerns about both levels of demand, and security and pupil safety, while others had worked successfully to encourage community involvement. Some community use was through open activities, other through 'bookings' by organisations from Sure Start to University of the Third Age. One centre saw expansion of community use as an opportunity to generate revenue. Only one, 'which had the most developed community programme', had undertaken initial research on community wants and expectations. (Stokes and West, June 2002)

It is encouraging that the 'community' dimension of EiC figures in the national evaluation. My reading of the early material is that City Learning Centres will need to sharpen their sense of purpose and build more effective alliances to support and sustain their work with the community and the adult learners in it.[7]

EAZs pre-dated EiC as an attempt to tackle under-achievement in disadvantaged areas by creating partnerships between a cluster of schools, the LEA and business and other community interests. According to the EAZ website, zone initiatives 'focus on four main themes: improving the quality of teaching and learning; social inclusion; family and pupil support; and working with

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

business and other organisations'. (www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/eaz). While adult learning seems most frequently to focus on parental roles, the NIACE family learning archive has examples where local vision has interpreted the EAZ agenda more comprehensively. The website cites a good example in the Barnsley EAZ's community project. An audit showed a need for 'support/education in a non-threatening environment for both young children and their parents. Large gaps were identified in local support and provision for families at risk, parenting support, health issues and the facility to provide and *empower people to support each other*' (my italics). Activities included playgroup facilities, outreach services, training for adults to access and a counselling facility. Learning sessions for parents were 'stressbusting, keeping up with your kids, play, emergency first aid, literacy skills, budgetary control, IT made easy, healthy snax'. Some adults joined accredited courses and NVQs in childcare were planned. The next steps were to be to provide a 'wrap-around, one-stop shop approach, with collaboration between statutory services' (www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/eaz). The project seems to embody both the principles of the full-service school model and its extension to embrace adult learning. However overall it is difficult to judge whether the EAZs have broken new ground, or indeed consolidated best practice in family learning. As there will now be no new EAZs, an analysis of their impact on adult learning and community expectations, and of their sustainability, would be useful.

Enriching the life of the school – unrealised potential?

In addition to these major spending programmes, various awards and initiatives for enriching school life offer, at least potentially, a way in for adult learners through both primary and secondary schools.

Healthy Schools, Sport England's Active Schools, Artsmark and Eco Schools each propose a set of standards which could be used as a springboard. For example, Healthy Schools programmes, based on a LEA/health authority partnership, require the involvement of statutory and non-statutory agencies and community groups in planning, delivery and evaluation. At school level, this means the involvement of parents, other specialist agencies and 'community partners' such as local businesses in appropriate themes of the programme [DfEE, 1999a]. Sport England offers Activemark to primary schools and Sportsmark to secondary schools; as with Artsmark and Eco Schools, accreditation works at school level with a good deal of room for manoeuvre. The awards might be expected to focus on how the community dimension strengthens the school, but they can also work in the other direction.

> ***Eco schools:*** *at Bishop Ullathorne School, Coventry: throughout the year pupils work with a wide range of outside bodies, including the local council, environmental groups, local companies and the local media. The school has a recycled orchestra, in which all the instruments are made by pupils from waste materials. Pupils performed their compositions in a local shopping centre to raise awareness of recycling.* (www.eco-schools.org.uk)

> ***Healthy schools:*** *staff at Aspinal Primary School wanted to use their school nurse more effectively. The school nurse agreed to develop a drop-in service...As a result of this:*
>
> - *The sex-education curriculum was revised*
> - *A parents' drop-in has been started as well.* (Manchester Healthy Schools Partnership, November 2000)

In Cumbria, the education and health partnership has helped develop a food co-operative at Newtown School, which serves a socially deprived area in Carlisle. Not only does this involve parents, who manage and organise the co-op from the school, but it also stimulates the local economy by its concentration on high-quality, locally-produced fresh fruit and vegetables. (DfES, 9 May 2002)

Active schools: *support for adults other than teachers (AOTT) is given at two levels:*

- *Level One: an in-school support pack to help the school induct AOTTs into the working environment and ethos of the school.*
- *Level Two: a Physical Education Awareness course can be attended to give more experienced AOTTs a greater insight into the subject. Among other aspects, it focuses on topics like differentiation, child protection, the National Curriculum and teaching styles.*

... AOTTs will be asked to keep a portfolio that will demonstrate their competences and experience in the physical education and school sport environment. Once a desired level of experience and competence has been gained, AOTTs can then access the second level of support through the Physical Education Awareness course. (www.sportengland.org/active_school)

Two aspects of these strategies are distinctive and important: they work from a curriculum perspective and they start from adults' natural involvement in the life of the school and the learning interests that arise from this. They remind us that a very important contribution of schools to adult learning may be to exploit how adults get hooked into learning. This is a familiar enough idea in family learning, but one that is just as relevant to other adults in the school community; for instance, governors who act as champions for the healthy school, or members of local sports clubs who work at the margins of formal education. It would be useful to look at how opportunities inherent in examples such as these have been developed.

'Out-of-School-Hours' activities provide a further set of opportunities: the chance to use out-of-school-hours learning as a springboard for adult learning, whether adults are co-learners or there to take advantage of the premises being open. Some argue that adults do not belong in these programmes other than as subordinate helpers. This may be particularly valid in programmes for older school students most in need of study support and confidence-building to develop their autonomy and learn in their own right as part of the transition to adulthood. But I think that there is an equally strong argument that for adults to be visibly learning at the same time (if not in the same room) is part of the normalisation of learning as an enjoyable aspect of life – setting aside the issue of not wasting resources. An example of a wider view of out-of-hours learning and its purposes are the Mentrau Iaith initiatives for the use of Welsh. These include homework and after-school clubs, holiday play schemes and workshops that both promote the use of Welsh as a medium amongst those whose first language it is and encourage non-Welsh speakers in the community to learn and participate (Education Extra, 2000).

'Supplementary schools' offer a different sort of out-of-school-hours experience by expressing particular communities' faith and/or cultural interests. For example, in my neighbourhood there are supplementary schools for the Korean and for the Arab and Muslim communities, physically based in a state school, providing language, cultural and religious activities. Some supplementary schools have a clear mission to remedy the deficiencies of the state system for pupils from the ethnic communities concerned – stereotyping, low expectations, failure to

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

respect religious observance and inattention to cultural heritage. Because they work by engaging adults from the community, they are also a powerful route to adult learning in its own right, developing self-esteem, an understanding of one's culture and political history, and survival skills.[8] For example, the Elimu Academy in Liverpool engages both adults and young people who have had negative school experiences; people come because black staff, who can identify with these experiences, work there and because the curriculum is relevant.[9] Supplementary schools challenge us to capitalise on this richness and on the choice that the adult participants have already made to learn.

There are, of course, many other ways in which adults appear in school as a resource of some kind – for instance, as mentors, in reminiscence work or as helpers or governors. As the examples above show, all routes have learning potential for the adults themselves. The following examples enlarge on this and show the possibilities when the context favours development and growth:

> *The Iron & Steel Trades Confederation trade union has made a conscious effort to become involved in Lifelong Learning and the wider community through engaging previously resistant learners. A major part of our activity is the training and supporting of ISTC Advocate Workers for Learning. One of our Advocate Workers in the Corby area is a school governor and he has developed, promoted and recruited 18 of his workmates onto an Introduction to Computers course at his local school each Saturday morning. The group have progressed onto further courses and the Advocate Worker is in the process of recruiting another group.*[10]

> *In the Going on the Sheltered Housing awareness week competition in 2000, the winning 'Little Acorn' project of Peterloo Court in Salford developed links with local schools. At the Anti-Rust Story Time Café, residents answered primary school children's questions about times past. Reminiscence classes were held with Hope High school and led to the production of a play by the school students, and a wall-hanging produced together at the school. Residents joined with students from two high schools on further activities and published* Peterloo People. *As well as the intergenerational work continuing, the residents' programme extended to learning to use IT, including skills for the book, creative writing, WEA classes, and learning projects for health and gardening.*[11]

> *The Hillingdon 'Time Travellers' scheme encourages adults aged 55–80 to work with children in their local community. Its growing team of volunteers now works in 19 schools and with two after-school homework clubs held in libraries... In return for their efforts, volunteers are offered a free adult education course. Margaret Harris opted for Computing for Beginners and has since followed it up with a more advanced course. It has proved a popular choice, as many of the volunteers attempt to keep pace with their computer-literate grandchildren, while some have opted for personal development courses.* (LGA, 2001b)

Doing better

The diversity of experience described above suggests how important it is to look beyond adult learners occupying the premises at the margins of school life, and how much is waiting to be exploited. There are plenty of good-practice examples and plenty of reports sharing them, but these don't in themselves offer an adequate, coherent framework for development. From looking at the ways in which adults go to school, five major issues seem to me to emerge.

First, if 'diversity' is the way forward for schools' development and additional funding (as the current Secretary of State insists), it is all the more necessary to ask them to define their

community with a rationale that is rooted in robust local information about participation and representation in learning. This would be a first step to minimising the elements of opportunism or fragmentation in bids for funding or other sorts of recognition. As we see, 'community' does not necessarily equal 'adult learner' in 'education-speak', but there should be a presumption that the interests of adult learners should be properly considered. Alongside this, schools should be encouraged, at the first stage of defining their aims and strategies, to use resources like the CEDC's community schools network as a means of developing a wider, more considered perspective.

Second, serving a set of learning interests and demonstrating participation, however valid, is not enough. Planning needs to take account not simply of formal progression routes, but of other continuities – including the very capacity to sustain interest in learning once excited. The 'community' role of city learning centres, for example, will only be fully demonstrated when learning IT skills lead to other forms of participation and to realising the potential in the 'local learning centre' model. In short, as I argued in the preceding section, a curriculum vision is needed. In this connection, it is clear that a better and more patient approach to impact analysis for new initiatives is wanted; 'better' because it is insufficient to measure change in terms of pupil attainment levels; 'patient' because changes in learning culture take time.

Third, in amongst all this, what means do we have of evaluating the impact on adults of learning in a school environment? What have adult learners themselves to say? In family learning, we know that they can feel very positive about the friendliness and intimacy of learning in primary schools. On the other hand, there is also plenty of evidence that those whose first experience of education was unsuccessful will not want to 'go back to school' – may indeed be terrified by the idea – and that large secondary schools, like colleges, are particularly daunting. One of the arguments for adults using schools is that it helps to create a climate of support for the school's work. We know that some adult users see it that way (particularly and precisely where they have come in through programmes designed to break down barriers), and that it matters to them that they are learning where their children learn. However does this apply to those attending the more traditional evening programmes at their local secondary school? How do learners regard the quality of the rooms, premises and equipment they use? Do they think this affects their learning? Do learners at community colleges see things differently? And do learners make the same sort of trade-offs in choosing to learn at a school as I assumed managers do? Research into adults' perceptions of school in all these contexts would be invaluable, and the LSC's National Learner Survey could usefully tackle some of them.

Fourth, then, we should not get excited only about new developments. The traditional model of the fairly formal, largely evening, secondary-school-based programme needs to be revisited and re-valuated, rather than being (as I think it is) taken for granted. To do so would help to focus policy and spending. For example, we could ask whether the community dimension of secondary schools' specialist-status bids should concentrate on opening up specialist facilities or on access at a more general level – building on the community college tradition. We could ask how best to design community rooms in primary schools; what we could add to adult programmes to give a sense of participation in the school community; or whether more flexible funding would help schools to organise better for adult learners.

Finally, it is plain that schools need more informed, comprehensive and consistent support for change – and they need to be expected to use it. The modernisation of local government leads to a redefinition of the role of LEAs – as bodies that encourage innovation and broker policy solutions: 'leading on learning', 'putting learning in the way of learners' and fostering community-led approaches to learning (LGA, 2001a). Some LEAs will need to bring in expertise to develop their own capacity to do this. They should expect to draw on support from local Lifelong Learning Partnerships and from the local LSC. In turn the LSC should recognise that the role is integral to the LEA's Adult and Community Learning remit alongside its contribution to

the Education Development Plan for schools – with, if all goes well, the new LSP providing the context. Collaborative working to enable schools to use the new opportunities will be a theme of the next section.

Key ideas

- Bids for additional funding through specialist status and future initiatives should require a considered definition of the community the school serves and its needs, and a demonstration of how the continuing interests of adult learners, particularly from under-represented groups, will be served. Schools should be able (and expected) to draw on expertise to help them in this.
- Schools have uniquely rich opportunities to re-engage adults in learning, working with those with whom they are already in contact in other ways. Good practice in doing this should be better disseminated.
- Proposals for developing the contribution of schools to adult learning should show how learning opportunities will be both sustained and broadened in the mid- and long-term.
- The model of the 'full-service school' should be extended to encompass adult learning together with leadership by the local community, and used widely to guide schools in developing their community role.
- LEAs should be given, and accept, the pivotal role in helping schools to develop their engagement with the community and adult learners, and in constructing strategies and brokering partnerships to this end. The LSC should recognise this task in future planning and funding guidance for Adult and Community Learning.
- Training packages should be created for school staff working as tutors and managers in adult learning on school premises, to complement existing professional development programmes.
- Research is needed in the following areas, to inform policy development and provide models for the future:
    - Mapping the range and volume of schools' contribution to adult learning, and evaluating the benefits to schools and learners of different models
    - Attitudes and perceptions of adults learning on school premises, including their views on the environment's effect on their learning and their relationship with the host school
    - Impact analysis over time of the contribution of initiatives such as EAZ and EiC to adult learning, and how far it has been sustained.
- OFSTED's evaluation schedules should include the school's contribution to community learning in its own right, and information on this from OFSTED inspections should be systematically collated.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

3 Creating success

If it's so good, why don't we all do it?

If community education is so attractive, why aren't more schools involved? This question, posed by Mog Ball, is an excellent starting point. She summarises the fundamental barriers as being:

- *The unwillingness of education policy-makers to embrace the whole philosophy*
- *The need for suitable premises*
- *The demands on school managers who need to understand and implement a community development approach*
- *The demands on teachers, who have little training support for these approaches*
- *The demands on communities who have to work hard if a community school is to work.* (Ball, 1998:52–3)

If we think about the commonly-cited practical barriers, they generally fit into these categories. For example, the City Learning Centres (and other schools with capital investment that commits them to community use) worry about issues of security. However these can be dealt with – by getting the design of new premises right; using smart cards for access; using a volunteer presence; agreeing codes of conduct for users with parents, school students and community members, and so on. The need for suitable premises is apparently more difficult; but schools are finding resources for parents' rooms, for example, and can now benefit from capital funding available to the LEA Adult and Community Learning services from the LSC.[12] The problem is for managers to find the time and energy to learn and to accept that they do not to have to invent solutions from scratch.

Perhaps the most significant barrier is the first in Mog Ball's list: not embracing a 'whole philosophy' can create huge problems. It is at the root of a repeated concern of schools using lottery, specialist or EiC capital funding: how can community use through these developments be expected to become self-financing and still retain its mission? The extent to which bids are designed by individual schools in quite an isolated way makes it more difficult to design for sustainability, because funding partners are not tied in at the right stage. However it also links to the question to which this paper has repeatedly returned: what is the 'community' and where do adult learners 'in their own right' fit within this?

It is worth re-emphasising that, in policy terms, schools get two main steers: to look at how the 'community' (or communities of interest, including parents) can help the school fulfil its core objectives; and to determine their community for themselves. It is not surprising, therefore, that many schools respond opportunistically. This does not necessarily make for bad practice and can lead into strategic thinking, but it does mean that practice is more likely to be limited and opportunities missed. It also, to repeat another point, means that some real achievements can go unnoticed. To take an example about the important issue of community engagement in steering development:

> *A secondary school in a multi-cultural and largely working-class community...took the view that involving pupils and staff in the planning and provision of a range of joint school-community activities and programmes would serve several, inter-connected purposes. It would promote the personal, intellectual and social*

> *development of the pupils and enhance their ability to participate within their community as informed citizens. It would provide opportunities for greater understanding of, and respect for, the cultural diversity within the area, and it would promote positive relations within the school and between the school and the local community... A small planning group was set up, involving* staff, governors and pupils... *Throughout the evolution of this programme,* pupils and parents *were key players in identifying the human and material resources available within the area.* (CEDC, 2000b:26) (my emphasis).

The 'community' representatives involved turned out to be pupils, staff, governors and parents. Did the planning group engage with the wider school community and the community 'out there'? How far was the growth of citizenship skills in the pupils matched by a greater confidence amongst adult community members in making their voices heard? It is pertinent, then, to maintain the distinction between 'community' and 'adult learners' and to distinguish the differing constituencies and interests that are referred to in accounts of community education or community learning.

The barriers for adult learners are all too familiar and are iterated in the research for this paper:

- Physical accessibility, particularly in rural and semi-rural areas – not all schools are equipped to meet needs of people with disabilities
- Psychological accessibility – daunting buildings, dark car parks, bewildering ground plans, off-putting or temporising replies to enquiries
- Getting hold of information (particularly if the school is host to another provider), and access to advice and guidance
- Suitability – lack of adult-friendly space for chatting, no refreshments, size of furniture, the right equipment (some readers will share my memories of the years when sewing-machines disappeared as a result of curriculum change)
- No crèche
- Timing – limited, or no daytime access
- Staffing – too few caretaking, cleaning or technicial staff on site out of school hours
- A limited or fragmented curriculum – no chance to develop interests and move on.

It may, of course, be sensitivity to these barriers that deters some schools (just as insensitivity may mean that some attempts to start up adult learning fail). However lest we be too pessimistic, it is worth reminding ourselves that adult learning flourishes in many schools, notwithstanding the barriers – perhaps because of the trade-offs, which I suggested adults may make, or because the pleasure of the class outweighs some of the irritants. In any event, many of these barriers can be overcome without undue difficulty, using the expertise of those involved in adult learning.

Barriers facing schools are complemented by barriers facing the agencies that would be the key sources of support. For example:

> **For LEAs:** the implications of 'Fair Funding' following local management of schools; government expectations of Education Development Plans; the long-term impact on the adult and community learning services of the 1992 Further and High Education Act.

For colleges: the combined impact of the 1992 Act (again); the FEFC-funding methodology and pressure on unit costs.

For all: development funding, which is time-limited and (in some cases) with output requirements that do not recognise the pace of adult learners' engagement or the timescales that may be needed to change attitudes to learning.

For all: capital funding (as in the NOF funding for learning centres or EiC), which is not accompanied by sustainable revenue funding.

None of these barriers is insuperable, but they require both vision and sustained collaborative working.

The examples that follow illustrate different ways in which potential barriers can be overcome: by thinking outside conventional boundaries and, crucially, by collaboration – drawing in a varied set of partners and not accepting conflicts of interest as an excuse.

Making it work – some examples

Literacy and numeracy

Read On – Write Away! is a community-focussed literacy initiative, constituted as an independent partnership, working across all age groups. The aim is to create a strategic approach to raising levels of literacy and basic skills in Derbyshire, working with others to develop innovative ways to get adults and children, communities and individuals engaged in learning. Projects and schemes include:

- Work with early years including Books for Babies, Books for Toddlers
- Projects in primary and secondary schools to engage the community and parents in schools; these include training programmes such as Better Reading Partnership and Talking Partners, and projects such as Buddy Readers, writing boxes, story sacks, interest kits and the Children's University
- A volunteer strategy that includes Millennium Volunteers (16–24-year-olds), Buddy Reading (young people working in schools), older volunteers and reading mentors (young offenders)
- Family Literacy – delivering a range of family learning (basic skills) programmes including the Standards Fund model, with variations on delivery, style and content to suit particular groups
- Work with unemployed adults – often a progression route for adults from other strands and projects e.g. Family Literacy and Better Reading Partnership. These programmes offer basic skills development in vocational contexts appropriate to individuals and accreditation of achievement
- Essential Skills at Work – workplace basic skills programmes tailor-made for particular employers and the individual needs of their employees. Delivered 'onsite' using a variety of models including intensive programmes.

Adult learners in schools can be:

- Parents/carers in Family Learning (basic skills) programmes
- Essential Skills at Work programmes for employees of or linked to the school – these can be Midday Supervisors, Education Care Officers, Caretaking staff and School Crossing Patrols. The courses are delivered in the school sometimes using computer suites, sometimes laptops or simply a free room, depending what resources are required
- Volunteers working with children, accessing a range of accredited programmes, including those from the workplace
- Adults involved in 'first step' learning – usually parents, carers or significant others, involved in short courses or tasters such as Mouse Mayhem, Make a Book with Your Child, Basic Skills with IT.[13]

Key points: *family learning flows into a range of adult learning opportunities enabling people to move on; recognising the importance of the school as a workplace as well as a site for adult learning; having a wide menu to respond to personal motivation; using the expertise of the specialist ROWA team.*

A local learning centre

No Limits Project, Bishop Heber High School, Cheshire is a lottery-funded project (using Capital Modernisation/NOF) in a high school serving rural south-west Cheshire. It incorporates a joint-use library, and builds on three successful precursor projects that demonstrate the local thirst for learning:

- Learn @ Malpas: a County Council Adult Education-funded project with the Library Service. It engages local learners informally through using IT, both at the library and in partner primary schools and other village venues, with more formal courses being funded by West Cheshire College
- Choices @ Malpas: an Information, Advice and Guidance Partnership-funded project to develop advice in the rural context, which grew out of Learn @ Malpas
- E-farming solutions: funded by a BT Lifelong Learning Award, which contacts rural businesses, provides a training advisor and training needs analysis. It loans PCs for a month, with suitable materials, on condition that the whole family and staff use them and get online. A support team is trained to help learning to continue, using No Limits. Purchase of the PCs and peripherals was funded by the local LSC. Areas near Malpas have been affected by foot and mouth disease and this project contributes to local recovery.

No Limits will :

- Be a high-specification, IT Learning Centre incorporating UK Online and learndirect
- Provide for rural outreach via remote video links and laptops connected to the IT centre and the high-speed internet portal
- Meet the needs of school students, local community and businesses alike, and be fully accessible to all from the start
- Be a major resource for communities in the Leader Plus Northern Marches economic, environmental and cultural regeneration partnership
- Use ICT to access a full range of learning opportunities and qualifications. This includes informal and drop-in learning for all purposes to advanced business and ICT applications, for everyone in the rural community. Its motto is *'learn to use IT – use IT to learn'*
- Be funded, in addition to the NOF revenue, by Cheshire County Council Adult Education Service and West Cheshire College, and through users' course or membership fees (after free initial access and remission of fees for some groups).

Ownership: from the start, community interests have been involved and school governors have played a key leadership role. A steering group brings all interests together, with
sub-groups for different areas of work. Centre users will be brought into steering developments. Success factors:

- The school's commitment to lifelong learning and its role as a unique resource for the local community
- Partnership in designing, owning and funding the project
- Local champions for learning with a powerful and all-embracing vision
- Being user-friendly – delivering learning how, when and where people want it (no class size restrictions or 'only on Tuesday' rules), with the learning starting informally and small scale.[14]

Key points: *using a combination of hi-tech solutions and a holistic view of learning to make learning accessible; a strategy that makes the most of different funding streams and works for sustainable revenue; partnership as the first, rather than a late, step in the project.*

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

College/school partnerships

Stockton and Billingham College provides courses for adults in partnership with local schools. Schools join the college's 'community partners' network, which has quarterly meetings. The shared commitment and 'recognition of mutual expertise' are considered key success factors. Partner providers include a learning advice shop, football club, health centres, faith centres, community halls and a large number of community organisations. Need is mainly identified by community partners. The college is responsible for quality assurance and there is an agreed financial structure and funding model. Nine secondary schools were involved in 2000/1; provision included computing courses, and the college's 'non-schedule 2' programme.[15] The college has also partnered a NOF bid.[16]

Key points: *exploiting 'non-schedule 2' funding to overcome the constraints of the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act; basing partnership on clear and transparent arrangements; using college experience of quality assurance.*

Newark and Sherwood College has developed an extensive network of partners across the Newark and Sherwood district of Nottinghamshire. In a regeneration area where isolation, inadequate transport, lack of confidence, poor previous experience of learning and family commitments have been barriers, over 1000 people have participated in learning in the last year. This has been achieved by working with the Primary Schools Partnership of schools and the LEA to provide easy access to local learning opportunities in around 25 schools and local venues. Consultation with teachers, parents and local groups ensures that courses meet needs. Over 400 students were new learners, and over 50 per cent of the learners progressed from tasters to entry or level 1 qualifications within the year.

An example of the partnership in practice is a ceramics project in three primary schools. Parents and friends of the school attended a free 10-week taster courses in ceramics and then worked with the children to create a project on a theme of their choice. At Python Hill Infants Schools, Rainworth, this produced a 10m Noah's Ark complete with animals, birds and sea life, with the children's faces creating a huge wave, all mounted in the school playground and providing beautiful visual stimulation. Finally, the group continued their individual work and members achieved City and Guilds Ceramics at entry level and NCFE Practical Crafts. Supported by the Standards Fund from the LEA the College has also developed basic skills in after-school Family Computer Clubs, with infant school parents and children visiting the junior schools prior to moving up.

The College also provides qualifications at the schools for employability. Laptops are used to support the programme and provide an additional IT facility in the smaller schools. Over the last 3 years around 100 students have completed the NCFE Initial Training for Classroom Assistants and at least 15 have gone on to NVQ Early Years Care and Education. Many are now in paid in employment in schools or childcare. Beauty and Holistic Therapies courses have achieved similar success, providing qualifications for paid work and self-employment.[17]

Key points: *building on a partnership fostered by the LEA to tackle barriers to access; using schools as a channel for consultation; designing the curriculum for mutual benefit to both adult learners and schools, including training to meet schools' needs for support staff.*

Growing the curriculum

Ysgol y Berwyn, Bala is a rural high school in North Wales. The school offers an NVQ in Agricultural Studies and has its own herd. This directly involves parents and the community – for example, parents teach sheepdog handling and the herd goes to local farms over Easter. The NVQ has also led the school to respond to the farming community's needs and contribute to the local economy. Poor administration skills meant that farmers were not getting grants to which they were entitled and IT skills were needed: the school now offers a Welsh-medium, ICT course in farm administration.[18]

Key points: *seeing the links between the school and the adult curriculum; turning community goodwill and engagement into learning.*

Sharing local management

Redditch 'ALLearn' emerged as a collaborative project from Redditch Lifelong Learning Network, chaired by Redditch Borough Council. Funded by the Worcestershire Lifelong Learning Partnership, the project set up four local forums, which included first and middle schools, and built on the local alliances already created by the Borough. The aim was to test local management structures for learning. Outcomes for the forums included:

- Batchley: links to Sure Start; extension of Family Literacy; Parent Education; IT courses at the first school; planning courses around childcare; completion of IT bid
- Church Hill: access to school IT suites for courses out of hours; trained Parent Education trainer; planned Family Learning Centre; classroom volunteers and Help Your Child with Maths courses; co-ordination of training at other venues; focus group; Social Services clearance for crèches at community venues
- Smallwood: planned day for parents; debt-awareness training; webwise for OAPs; confidence-building; parenting for those with older children
- Woodrow: oral history project; basic IT; co-ordination of courses around childcare; information point; focus group; gardening festival.[19]

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Key points: *using community forums to identify local learning interests and access needs, enable schools to contribute and promote joint working.*

LEAs 'Leading on Learning'

Somerset County Council's vision for local learning embraces eight proposals:

- Encourage staff in schools and other learning establishments to work more closely together
- Establish geographically-based Community Learning Areas where learning providers would share responsibility for planning, delivering and managing learning programmes
- Establish pilot governing bodies responsible for management, resources and service delivery for all learning establishments within the Community Learning Area
- Increase the use of facilities to provide all-year-round learning
- Establish a purpose-built Community Learning Centre to cater for learners of all ages and act as a base for multi-agency work
- Review the traditional school year and day
- Pilot alternative ways of learning, with learners involved in determining their own learning and support needs
- Provide further learning opportunities available through new technology.

Following consultation, the Authority is now engaged in further research and pilots to test the ideas (LGA, 2001:7).

Key points: *the potential for LEAs to develop their leadership role; dismantling barriers between schools and other interests.*

Hillingdon has created strong links between its Adult Education Service, schools, libraries and community organisations to widen participation in learning and overcome barriers to access. Interlocking features of these links include:

- Mutual enrichment of the adult and school curriculum
- Family literacy and learning

- 'Schools of concern' – using family education to break the cycle of under-achievement
- Playground and 'on the street' recruitment of adults to learning; training people from local communities to act as researchers, running focus groups in their own communities
- Libraries: using ICT and the People's network for learning, exploiting the potential of broadband
- Examples of how these links work are:
    - A new parent centre at Wood End Park Community School, with a range of courses in school hours, funded by the Adult Education service and free to school parents. Courses include Computing, First Aid, Help Your Child to Learn, Spanish and a course of combined dressmaking and English for the Somali Women's Group. Parents are encouraged to suggest other ideas
    - The Time Travellers Scheme (see the preceding section)
- Strategically, a balance of informal and targeted/skill-based work; maintaining a mixed economy of provision, positioning lifelong learning coherently in the Community Plan.[20]

Key points: *co-ordinating the work of different services in the interests of adult learners; understanding the links between school achievement and adult participation – school and 'adult' interests are not in opposition but mutually supportive.*

Making it work – the lessons

The examples suggest that:

- Mutually-assured interest and recognition of complementary expertise make all the difference (No Limits, Stockton and Billingham College, Newark and Sherwood College, ROWA, Redditch ALLearn, Hillingdon).
- The role of volunteers, informed lay members of the community, new intermediaries, such as advisors, and working with new players are all vital in making us rethink what and how we do, and in firing enthusiasm (ROWA, Ysgol Y Berwyn, Stockton and Billingham College, No Limits).
- Funding packages can be created for adult learning in schools, provided the expertise is there to do so and there is some mid- to long-term thinking (No Limits)
- Colleges will benefit from thinking of schools as more than just host locations – schools can provide information on what communities want and enable a web of

opportunities to be created (Stockton and Billingham College, Newark and Sherwood College)

- Engagement of the local community in school activities can be the springboard for a wider vision (Ysgol y Berwyn)

- It makes sense to see schools as part of a network of community partners, including the voluntary sector, that share a local learning vision - and for schools to see themselves in this way (Stockton and Billingham College, No Limits, Redditch ALLearn)

- What matters for learners, then, is a means of pulling together disparate individual activities so that overall access gets better and so that different learning journeys can be made (ROWA, Hillingdon)

- 'Leading on Learning', LEAs are uniquely well placed to negotiate a vision for adult learning in schools *and* to facilitate the arrangements for making it possible - for example, using improved funding from LSCs for adult and community learning to improve local arrangements for governance, co-ordination and professional support (Somerset, Hillingdon)

A less formal lesson may be that thinking big is a good idea. It is easy to over-complicate a project - but wasteful not to think about the implications. From my own experience, I think that schools, like any agency, can confuse the need for a measured approach towards changes they can manage with avoiding the necessary initial thinking and dreaming.

There are, of course, other lessons from the experiences described in this paper:

- *Community engagement is not an optional extra to school effectiveness.* That is to say that all 'successful' schools have the support of parents and of the communities they come from, at least implicitly. The *Raising Standards: Opening Doors* report shows how community links support pupil achievement. Schools that are struggling are likely to be those most in need of engaging directly with adult learning and this has obvious implications for how funding is made available to help recovery.

- *Family Learning needs to be set in a broader context of adult learning.* Examples quoted earlier suggest that otherwise its potential (and the impact of the increased funding from the LSC) will be diminished.

- *Schools need to build on the learning that is taking place all around them.* What matters is what the school can offer to *add*. Good examples are the participation (noted above) of school employees in 'Essential Skills at Work', or how some schools work with supplementary schools.

- *Buying into a circumscribed agenda for access to IT for learning is not satisfactory.* As I argued in Section 1, unless there is a wider learning agenda, this not only makes for too limited an offer to adults, but actually creates problems of funding, access, management and staffing.

- *Becoming a provider in one's own right is hard.* The experience of many specialist and EiC schools has shown this. Too much has to be learnt too fast, and (for longer-term funding) systems for planning, contract compliance, audit trails and quality assurance have to be working. Partnerships with colleges, adult education services or major voluntary providers such as the WEA (Workers' Educational Association) are much more likely to enable schools to cope.

- *Understanding the local strategic context is essential.* For example, neighbourhood renewal strategies, community plans and the work of local strategic partnerships will help schools to work out their direction, find partners and possibly secure funding.

- *Alliances of schools and working partners like Sure Start should be promoted.* Information on the plans of EAZs suggests that some, though not all, have a strong commitment to the value of adult learning in its own right and that the zone's structure can help to fulfil this.[21] It is particularly valuable to use the 'family' of primary and high schools as a basis, where this exists.

- *User and learner views must be built into the development process and spending decisions.* This should not only be about learning interests, but about what will make the environment more adult-friendly (exterior lighting, refreshments, how the telephone is answered?).

- *So: schools need to be able to draw on outside expertise to:*

    - Get and use local data (socio-economic profiling, deprivation indices, levels of adult participation, existing market research and evidence of adult learning interests)
    - Design and negotiate their offer to adult learners
    - Make appropriate, useful partnerships
    - Deal with access to funding and systems development
    - Develop their own capacity, amongst support staff, teachers and managers alike.

Consultancy and training for these purposes and an ongoing support service should be offered by LEAs as honest brokers, or local Lifelong Learning Partnerships could take on this task. (At the time of writing, the future role and remit of the Partnerships was unsure, following the decision to transfer their funding to local LSCs from 2003. They are in principle ideally placed to help schools work with other partnership members).

What schools owe us

All this presupposes that schools want to do better by their communities than simply open up for a few activities that make a little income, or offer some good but isolated learning opportunities to parents. Current policy debate talks little of what schools owe their communities and partners. However, it is not unreasonable to argue that, given the public resources poured into them, schools should do their best to make those resources available for local communities, including communities of interest. This is certainly implied by the specialist funding requirements to open up new facilities or spend a proportion of revenue on 'the community'. It is also reasonable to say that making resources available for the community should entail giving priority to the interests of adult learners through both formal and informal learning activity. High levels of community use of school premises do not automatically contribute to learning, although they may be justified by creating a climate for it, or by other social purposes.

What we might ask of schools is to:

- Define explicitly the communities that they consider themselves to relate to
- Be aware of essential information about those communities in respect of adult learning and levels of attainment

- Commit in principle to at least some access to school premises being to meet community learning needs, at times and in ways to suit the community and not to generate additional income
- Discuss with local interests – through the LEA, learning partnerships, local lifelong learning forums, neighbourhood or strategic partnerships – how they can contribute to broader learning aims for the community
- Be clear about their reasons for becoming involved in adult learning, the values that inform this and how it fits into the school development plan
- Proceed on the assumption that the development of adult learning involves partnership working, and consult directly with other providers who might be affected, for good or ill, before putting on adult learning activities
- Recognise and use the skills and expertise of practitioners in lifelong learning rather than going it alone
- Develop a curriculum strategy for adult learning, as a shared activity with partners, that makes sense of the range of learning and opportunities for moving on
- Be in a position to assure the quality of those activities – in terms of suitably trained staff, support to learners and quality-assurance systems
- Be an active, not a passive host to providers using school premises – consider how their work can be supported to build local commitment to the school and how the school can influence the offer, for example by seeking parents' views
- Secure active user/learner involvement in steering and managing the work, with direct community representation, and build capacity for this.

For community colleges and other schools with a strong record, the list may appear banal. For very large numbers of schools it would represent a transformation of perspective.

What next?

I have already referred to the 2001 Education Bill and its implications for adults. The influence of the LSC will be crucial in a number of ways, but is as yet unclear. The transfer of sixth-form funding to the LSC from 2002 has brought fears of a threat to small sixth forms, but also the suggestion that viability, in rural areas at least, could be maintained by recruiting adult learners. We do not yet know how far the LSC will use schools as a means of engaging 'new' adult learners; or how schools have accessed the Local Initiatives Funds in their first year, and for what. However, the biggest question is how far the slow-burning policy of broadening the range of providers of post-school learning will include developing the role of schools. The LSC appears cautious about the intentions of the Education Bill:

> *The government wants to encourage schools, in partnership with other providers and local authorities, to develop a range of services that support families in their local community...*
>
> *Whilst it is great to open up schools for wider use, we feel that this is best done within the context of the local authorities [sic] Adult Learning Plan. If schools are allowed and indeed encouraged to open up for wider use without any strategic steer or requirement to collaborate with existing providers it could undermine coherent planning of local services and increase duplication of provision.* (LSC, March/May, 2002)

The arguments for coherence are wise, but the tone suggests some doubt about whether this will sit with current DfES thinking about schools.

The division of inspection responsibilities between OFSTED and the ALI, and the high level of interest in the 14–19 curriculum and achievement levels, make it unlikely that area inspections or LSC area reviews will take adult learning interests fully into account, although they will inevitably affect them collaterally.

In the wider context of community wellbeing, the speed with which the new LSPs will develop and exercise influence is unsure. In the neighbourhood renewal priority areas they are clearly picking up on the ideas about local delivery and co-ordination of services embodied in the 'full-service school' and local learning centres.

However, the articulation of government policy associated with the July 2002 comprehensive spending review perpetuates the policy ambiguities that this paper has discussed. One of the new secondary school models is to be the 'extended school' (based, again, on the 'full service school' model) and services may be delivered locally through other schools; the 'services' could include adult and family learning. But this is the only schools' initiative explicitly linked to adult learners: by contrast, the intended expansion in out-of-hours learning for pupils in all schools is silent on the possibilities for adults (DfES, June 2002). 'Diversity' appears to be incompatible with a coherent view of schools' relationship with their communities, of how their resources are used, and of their role in adult learning.[22]

In sum, there are a number of important and potentially beneficial levers for change. However, as I suggested in the opening section, schools will have to work hard to exploit potential in this complex environment.

Schools and adult learners – a New Deal

In the end it is all about how we want to create learning communities. Essentially, this paper proposes a new deal for schools in this enterprise. Schools should accept the obligations entailed in becoming genuine local learning centres that serve the needs of adults as well as young people, without prioritising one over the other, and cede some of their autonomy in order to work in partnership to this end. If the local need is there (and this includes the need to use resources well), schools should not have the right to opt out. In return, they should get the support they need to do it. This deal is not in conflict with their obligations to pupils – indeed, schools can only benefit from the increased support from their community – but it is based on the evidence that adult learners cannot do without school either. It means a reconfiguration of ideas about the community school or college, in the light of the new policy environment discussed in this paper, which accommodates the government's interest in diversity and schools' own responsibility for defining their purposes. From a variety of starting points, plenty of examples have emerged to show that all this is possible. What is needed is a change of expectations.

Key ideas

- The development of schools' role in adult learning and as community resources needs to be planned for the long term in the interests of learners. Partnerships that will secure continuing funding, as well as providing essential expertise, should be created from the start. Requiring specialist-funding bids to become self-financing over time will exclude many adult learners and limit the curriculum.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

- Such partnerships should recognise the benefits of bringing in non-traditional players and learner representatives; schools' own roots in their communities should be the starting-point for this.
- LEA's leading on learning have a critical role in dismantling barriers to partnership working and can harness resources authority-wide to promote change.
- Community engagement and specifically serving the needs of adult learners is not in conflict with school effectiveness and raising pupil achievement, but supports it.
- Re-defining the role of schools and the concept of community schools is an essential step to building learning communities.
- Our national expectations of how schools should contribute to adult learning should be spelt out.
- All this requires a 'new deal' for schools, which both commits them to serve the needs of adult learners by working collaboratively to become local learning centres and provides the financial and professional support to achieve this.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Appendix: Getting started

A checklist for schools

- ❑ What do you see as your 'community'?
- ❑ Why do we want to be involved?
- ❑ What do you know about the makeup of the community and any significant economic, social or environmental developments? What are the issues and opportunities for learning? What do you need to find out?
- ❑ What do you know of your community's needs or interests in lifelong learning? How will you find out about this?
- ❑ How will you consult potential learners? How can members of the school community help?
- ❑ What learning opportunities are already available to adults in your community?
- ❑ What do you know about local structures and strategies – Local Strategic Partnership, Neighbourhood Forums, community strategies, local regeneration or rural recovery plans? Do they have any pointers for you?
- ❑ What do you know about the local Learning and Skills Council plans and your LEA's Adult Learning Plan? What are their implications for you?
- ❑ How are adults involved in the school or on school premises at present? Who is responsible for this?
- ❑ What strengths have you to build on – for example, links to your community, out-of-school-hours work, projects that could develop learning dimensions? Are there any points in your school development plan relevant to lifelong learning?
- ❑ What resources are in school that would help adults participate? For example, do you have: community rooms; suitable furniture; specialist facilities; IT suite; suitable WCs; a crèche, or space for one?
- ❑ What barriers might adults experience in accessing these? What about access for people with disabilities?
- ❑ What are the barriers for you – for example security, pupil safety? How could they be overcome? Are there any legal constraints on your use of school premises?
- ❑ What are governors' views on developing lifelong learning activities here? How will they be involved?
- ❑ What are staff views?
- ❑ What skills and know-how do you need to develop? What about staff training needs? What expertise should you call on from outside the school?
- ❑ What are the leadership and management issues to be tackled?
- ❑ Who will be your partners in developing, funding and supporting a programme for adult learners?
- ❑ How will you involve the community in steering developments?

(Adapted from a consultancy checklist prepared for Cheshire County Council Adult and Community Learning)

Resources to support early thinking

- *Building Learning Communities: Developing the role of schools in the community.* CEDC (Community Education Development Centre), 2000. Woodway Park School, Wigston Road, Coventry CV2 2RH. info@cedc.org.uk; www.cedc.org.uk

  A near-comprehensive pack for school leaders and governors; it is, however, limited in its discussion of partnerships, and particularly on the role of LEAs.

- *Walking Ten Feet Tall: A toolkit for family learning practitioners.* Jeanne Haggart. NIACE, 2001.

  A pack for practitioners and organisers. Much of this toolkit would be an excellent resource for considering wider adult learning issues.

- *Raising Standards: Opening doors: Developing links between schools and their communities.* DfEE 1999. DfES Publications, PO Box 5050, Annesley, Nottingham NG15 0DJ. dfes@prologistics.co.uk

  An overview with examples of good practice and particularly clear sections on the legal position and financial issues (subject to changes in the subsequent Education Bill).

References

1 Research carried out by Rob Hunter for NIACE.

2 Personal communication via NIACE Lifelong Learning Mailing List – Alastair Clark, BECTA.

3 Personal communication – C Fox Davis

4 Personal communication – Richard Dyke, with the example provided by Linda Truscott, Torbay Community Education.

5 Personal communication – Sheila Craig.

6 I have maintained anonymity in examples drawn from my own experience.

7 EiC will not now be extended to other areas; the new 'excellence clusters' for schools outside the EiC heartlands will concentrate on the collaboration to improve pupil support and achievement without an explicit community dimension.

8 NIACE Family Learning archive.

9 Personal communication – Lenford White, NIACE.

10 Personal communication – David Smales, Steel Partnership Training, ISTC.

11 *The Little Acorn Project.* Nelson D, Irwell Valley Housing Association (unpublished). *Our History my Heritage: Synopsis of 'Peterloo People' project.* Jahoda N (June 2002 – unpublished). Information from Jim Soulsby, NIACE.

12 As well as being able to bid for major capital funding, LEAs will receive grants in 2002/3 for adaptations to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination and Special Educational Needs and Disability Acts. These adaptations should also help schools to be more adult-friendly generally.

13 Personal communication – ROWA staff. See www.rowa.co.uk

14 Case study provided by No Limits, with thanks to Michael Carding, Head, Bishop Heber High School.

15 FEFC programme that enabled colleges to offer non-accredited programmes in order to widen participation.

16 Personal communication – Susan Waters, Adult Learner Manager, Stockton and Billingham College; 'Working Partnership Links "Different Worlds"'. Moran, A. and Waters, S. Adults Learning. December, 2001.

17 Personal communication – Val Wilson, Newark and Sherwood College.

18 NIACE Family Learning archive.

19 Response to NIACE survey on Local Authorities, Adult Learning and Neighbourhood Renewal: Michael Conway-Jones, Manager, Redditch Employment Development Initiative, Redditch Borough Council.

20 Presentation to NIACE conference 5 December 2001 – Philip O'Hear, Corporate Director, Education Youth and Leisure Services, London Borough of Hillingdon; Press release, London Borough of Hillingdon (8 January 2001).

21 NIACE Family Learning archive.

22 There is also a commitment to a review of adult learning, the results of which will flow into the DfES Skills Strategy due later in 2002. Links with the schools agenda are unstated.

Bibliography

Alexander T (2000) 'Citizenship Schools: The new learning revolution' in Lucas B and Greany T (eds) Schools in the Learning Age, Campaign for Learning

Ball M (1998) School Inclusion: The school, the family and the community, Joseph Rowntree Foundation

CEDC (2000a) 'Making it Happen: A practical guide for schools and their partners on developingtheir role within their communities' in *Building Learning Communities: Developing the role of schools in the community*, CEDC

CEDC (2000b) 'We Could Do That: Case studies of schools working with their communities' in *Building Learning Communities*, CEDC

DETR (2000) *Our Countryside: The future: A fair deal for rural England*, The Stationery Office

DETR (2001) *Local Strategic Partnerships: Government guidance*, Department for Environment, Transport and the Regions

DfEE (1998) *The Learning Age: A renaissance for a new Britain: Presented to Parliament by the Secretary of Station for Education and Employment by command of Her Majesty*, Cm 3790, Stationery Office

DfEE (1999a) *National Healthy School Standard: Guidance*, Department for Education and Employment

DfEE (1999b) *Raising Standards: Opening doors: Developing links between schools and their communities*, Department for Education and Employment

DfEE (2000) *The Learning and Skills Council Remit Letter from the Secretary of State for Education and Employment*, Department for Education and Employment

DfES (2001) *Schools Achieving Success*, Department for Education and Skills, The Stationery Office

DfES (2002) EiC: *Schools Extending Excellence: Annual report 2000–2001*, Department for Education and Skills

DfES (9 May 2002) Press notice, Department for Education and Skills

DfES (June 2002) *Department for Education and Skills 2002 Spending Review: Investment for reform*, Department for Education and Skills

Education Extra (2001) *Extra Time* Issue 22

Fryer RH (November 1997) *Learning for the Twenty-First Century, first report of the National Advisory Group for Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning*, available from the Department for Education and Skills

Haggart J (2000) *Learning Legacies: A guide to family learning*, NIACE

LGA (2001a) *Leading on Learning: LGA position paper on the future education role of local councils*, Local Government Association

LGA (2001b) *Regeneration and Renewal*, 23 March 2001, Local Government Association

LSC (March/May 2002) *LSC Adult and Community Learning Newsletter*, Learning and Skills Council

OFSTED (1999) *Handbook for Inspecting Secondary Schools*, The Stationery Office

OFSTED (2000) *Sports Colleges: The first two years*, The Stationery Office

OFSTED (9 October 2001) Press release, OFSTED

Manchester Healthy Schools Partnership (November 2000) *Making a Difference*, Manchester Healthy Schools Partnership

PATS (1999) *Skills for Neighbourhood Renewal: Local solutions: Final report of the Policy Action Team on Skills*, Department for Education and Employment

SEU (1998) *Bringing Britain Together: A national strategy for neighbourhood renewal*, Social Exclusion Unit, The Stationery Office

SEU (January, 2001) *A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal: National strategy action plan*, Social Exclusion Unit, Cabinet Office

Stokes E and West A (June 2002) *Excellence in Cities: City learning centres strand study: Preliminary report on city learning centres*, NFER, LSE, IFS. NFER website: www.nfer.ac.uk

TES (2001) *Times Educational Supplement*, 30 November

Thompson J (2001) *Rerooting Lifelong Learning: Resourcing neighbourhood renewal*, NIACE

Wolfendale S and Bastiani J (eds) (2000) The Contribution of *Parents to School Effectiveness*, David Fulton

Schools are for adults too

Schools, adults and communities in the learning age

Judith Summers

Ideas are developing which put schools at the focal point for learning in their communities. Yet policies and practice based on these ideas are confused and contradictory. Where schools do provide opportunities for adults to learn, it is often undervalued or even ignored.

Too often, imaginative ideas seem to win recognition only if they are shown to help school students. Too many activities occur in isolation. Too many opportunities are lost.

This policy discussion paper sets out a challenge to government at national and local level, key organisations and local players to agree a new role for schools as genuine local learning centres. It explores the policy environment that is leading to a new view of schools' relationship with their communities and reviews different models of how adults go to school. Containing examples of good practice, key ideas and a checklist for schools starting to engage with adult learning, it offers recommendations for government, local education authorities, the Learning and Skills Council and the Inspectorates, as well as NIACE and its partners.

Given the widening of powers available to schools through the Education Act 2002, this paper provides a valuable stimulus to thinking about how we can work more productively and coherently to meet the needs of adults in our communities.

Judith Summers has held senior positions in further and adult education and is a former Chair of NIACE. She has a long-standing interest in adult learning policies at national and international levels. She was a member of the Kennedy Committee on widening participation and in 2001 was the co-author of a study for the European Union on adult learning projects in the Socrates programme. As a consultant for Cheshire County Council, Adult and Community Learning she has worked closely with schools to develop their role as resources for lifelong learning.

niace
promoting adult learning

21 De Montfort Street
Leicester LE1 7GE

ISBN 1 86201 154 0

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

51

ISBN 1-86201-154-0

9 781862 011540

CE084591

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

ERIC Educational Resources Information Center

REPRODUCTION RELEASE

(Specific Document)

I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION:

Title: SCHOOLS ARE FOR ADULTS TOO : SCHOOLS, ADULTS AND COMMUNITIES IN THE LEARNING AGE.	
Author(s): JUDITH SUMMERS	
Corporate Source: NIACE	Publication Date: NOVEMBER 2002

II. REPRODUCTION RELEASE:

In order to disseminate as widely as possible timely and significant materials of interest to the educational community, documents announced in the monthly abstract journal of the ERIC system, *Resources in Education* (RIE), are usually made available to users in microfiche, reproduced paper copy, and electronic media, and sold through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). Credit is given to the source of each document, and, if reproduction release is granted, one of the following notices is affixed to the document.

If permission is granted to reproduce and disseminate the identified document, please CHECK ONE of the following three options and sign at the bottom of the page.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 1 documents	The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2A documents	The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2B documents
PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY Sample TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) 1	PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE, AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY, HAS BEEN GRANTED BY Sample TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) 2A	PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY Sample TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) 2B
Level 1 ↑ ☐	Level 2A ↑ X	Level 2B ↑ ☐
Check here for Level 1 release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche or other ERIC archival media (e.g., electronic) and paper copy	Check here for Level 2A release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche and in electronic media for ERIC archival collection subscribers only	Check here for Level 2B release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche only

Documents will be processed as indicated provided reproduction quality permits.
If permission to reproduce is granted, but no box is checked, documents will be processed at Level 1.

I hereby grant to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) nonexclusive permission to reproduce and disseminate this document as indicated above. Reproduction from the ERIC microfiche or electronic media by persons other than ERIC employees and its system contractors requires permission from the copyright holder. Exception is made for non-profit reproduction by libraries and other service agencies to satisfy information needs of educators in response to discrete inquiries.

Sign here, please

Signature: [signature]	Printed Name/Position/Title: PARIN MOLEDINA / ADMINISTRATOR	
Organization/Address: NIACE RENAISSANCE HOUSE, 20 PRINCESS Rd WEST, LEICESTER, LE1 6TP	Telephone: 0116 2044210	FAX: 0116 2044262
	E-Mail Address: parin@niace.org.uk	Date: 9/5/03

(Over)

III. DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY INFORMATION (FROM NON-ERIC SOURCE):

If permission to reproduce is not granted to ERIC, *or*, if you wish ERIC to cite the availability of the document from another source, please provide the following information regarding the availability of the document. (ERIC will not announce a document unless it is publicly available, and a dependable source can be specified. Contributors should also be aware that ERIC selection criteria are significantly more stringent for documents that cannot be made available through EDRS.)

Publisher/Distributor: NIACE / CENTRAL BOOKS	
Address: RENAISSANCE HOUSE 20 PRINCESS ROAD WEST LEICESTER LE1 6TP	99 WALLIS ROAD LONDON E9 5LN
Price: £8.95	

IV. REFERRAL OF ERIC TO COPYRIGHT/REPRODUCTION RIGHTS HOLDER:

If the right to grant this reproduction release is held by someone other than the addressee, please provide the appropriate name and address:

Name:
Address:

V. WHERE TO SEND THIS FORM:

Send this form to the following ERIC Clearinghouse:

Acquisitions Coordinator
ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education
Center on Education and Training for Employment
1900 Kenny Road
Columbus, OH 43210-1090

However, if solicited by the ERIC Facility, or if making an unsolicited contribution to ERIC, return this form (and the document being contributed) to: